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OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

EDITED BY ROBERT BELL

VOLUME IV

LONDON
JOHN W. PARKER AND SON WEST STRAND
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POEMS

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

The Canterbury Tales.

THE PROLOGE OF THE PERSONES TALE.

BY that the Maunciple had his tale endid,
The sonne fro the south line is descendid
So lowe, that it nas nought to my sight
Degrees nyne and twenty as in hight.
Foure[1] on the clokke it was, as I gesse,
For enleven foote, or litil more or lesse,
My schadow was at thilke tyme of the yere,
Of which feet as my lengthe parted were
In sixe feet equal of proporcioun.
Therwith the mones exaltacioun,
In mena Libra, alway gan ascende,[2]
As we were entryng at a townes ende.

[1] Tyrwhitt's reading, supported by some MSS., is preferred to *ten*, that of the Harl. MS., because the time indicated by the length of the shadow would be about that hour. By this reckoning, as Tyrwhitt observes, there would be three hours till sunset, so that 'one does not well see with what propriety the Host admonishes the Persone to haste him, because 'the sonne wol adoun.'' But from the unfinished state of the poem, all the circumstances of time and place are in inextricable confusion.

[2] Tyrwhitt observes that this is an obscure passage. 'Exaltation,' he says, 'is not to be considered as a technical term, but as signifying simply *rising;* and the sense will be that the moon's rising in the middle of Libra was continually ascending,' &c. He suggests as the only reading which would be astronomically correct—

'Therwith Saturnes exaltation,
I mene Libra, alway gan ascend.'

For which our Host, as he was wont to gye,
As in this caas, our joly compaignye,
Sayd in this wise: 'Lordynges, everichoon,
Now lakketh us no moo tales than oon,[1]
Fulfilled is my sentens and my decre;
I trowe that we han herd of ech degre.
Almost fulfilled is myn ordynaunce;
I pray to God so geve him right good chaunce,
That tellith to us his tale lustily.
Sir prest,' quod he, 'artow a vicory?
Or artow a persoun?[2] say soth, by thy fay.
Be what thou be, ne breke nought oure play;
For every man, save thou, hath told his tale.
Unbocle, and schew us what is in thy male,
For trewely me thinketh by thy chier,
Thou scholdist wel knyt up a gret matier.
Tel us a tale[3] anoon, for cokkes boones!'

This Persoun him answerde al at oones:
'Thow getist fable noon i-told for me,
For Poul,[4] that writes unto Timothe,
Repreveth hem that weyveth sothfastnesse,
And tellen fables, and such wrecchednesse.
Why schuld I sowen draf out of my fest,
Whan I may sowe whete, if that me lest?
For which I say, if that yow lust to hiere
Moralite and vertuous matiere,
And thanne that ye wil give me audience,
I wol ful fayn at Cristis reverence
Do yow plesaunce leful, as I can.
But trusteth wel, I am a suthern man,[5]

---

[1] And yet the Webbe, the Dyer, the Tapicer, the Plowman, and the Knight's Yeman had none of them told a tale.

[2] See vol. i. p. 97, note 5.

[3] The Lansd. MS. reads *fable*, which is the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt, and it seems to be authorised by the Parson's reply.—W.

[4] 1 Tim. iv. 7.

[5] Minstrelsy seems to have flourished chiefly in the northern parts of the island, and indeed in the north generally. In almost all our old ballads the harper or minstrel is represented as being of the

I can not geste, rum, raf, ruf, by letter,[1]
Ne, God wot, rym hold I but litel better.
And therfor, if yow lust, I wol not glose,
I wol yow telle a mery tale in prose,
To knyt up al this fest, and make an ende;
And Jhesu for his grace wit me sende
To schewe yow the way, in this viage,
Of thilke perfyt glorious pilgrimage
That hatte Jerusalem celestial.[2]
And if ye vouchesauf, anoon I schal

'north countree.' Thus, in *King Estmere*, in Percy's collection, Adler says to the King—

'And you shall be a harper, brother,
Out of the north *countree*.'

[1] To *geste* means to recite gests or historical ballads. To *rum*, *raf*, *ruf* is intended as a burlesque upon that peculiar kind of poetry which was formed on the principle of alliteration. This alliteration was the principle of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and it was naturally adopted by those English writers who used the language of the lower orders, in which the Saxon element predominated.—See vol. i. p. 46. The taste for alliteration observable in our ballad poetry down to, at least, the middle of the sixteenth century, may be traced to the lingering influence of the old usage; and examples of intentional alliteration are found even in Pope, of which we have an instance in the well-known line:—

'Up a high hill he heaved a huge round stone.'

The following description of the theological treatises sometimes introduced at feasts, much in the manner of *The Persones Tale*, taken from *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, supposed to be written by Robert Langland, a priest, and Chaucer's contemporary, will give the reader an idea of this kind of poetry:—

'Ac if thei carpen of Christ,
Thise clarkis and thise lewid,
At the meat in myrthes, when
Mynstrelis ben stille,
Thanne telle thei of the Trinyte
A tale other tweye,
And bringen forth a ballad reson,
And taken Bernard to witnesse,
And putten forth a presumption
To preve the sothe;
Thus they dryvelen at hire deys
The deyte to knowe,
And gnawen God wit the gorge,
Whanne hire guttes ben fulle.'

[2] The allusion is to Gal. iv. 26, where by the heavenly Jerusalem is

Bygynne my tale, for which I yow pray
Telle your avis, I can no better say.
But natheles this meditacioun
I put it ay under correccioun
Of clerkes,[1] for I am not textuel;
I take but the sentens, trustith wel.
Therfor I make protestacioun,
That I wol stonde to correccioun.'
Upon this word we han assented soone.
For, as it semed, it was for to done,
To enden in som vertuous sentence,
And for to geve him space and audience;
And bad oure Host he schulde to him say,
That alle we to telle his tale him pray.
Our Host hadde the wordes for us alle;[2]
'Sir prest,' quod he, 'now faire yow bifalle;
Say what yow lust, and we wil gladly hiere.'
And with that word he said in this manere;
'Telleth,' quod he, 'your meditacioun;
But hasteth yow, the sonne wol adoun.[3]
Beth fructuous, and that in litel space,
And to do wel God sende yow his grace.'

---

understood the church triumphant in heaven, to which the Persone here desires to show the people the way.

[1] The Persone here, and subsequently in his tale, disclaims any pretensions to learning. This description of himself is apparently inconsistent with the account given of him in the General Prologue as a 'lerned man, a clerk;' but the expression must be accepted in a comparative sense. Although he possessed sufficient knowledge to preach sensibly, to instruct his parishioners in the general principles of Christianity, and might, therefore, be fairly called 'lerned' in comparison with parsons who preached other people's sermons, and could read the Bible only in the vulgar tongue; yet, nevertheless, he might still be ignorant of scientific theology, the rules of critical exegesis, and the philosophy of Christian doctrine and morals. Thus, he says, 'I take the sentens' (*sententia*, the general meaning), 'but I am not 'textuel,'' that is, I cannot comment critically on the text.

[2] Tyrwhitt observes that this is a French phrase, and quotes from the Rolls of Parliament, 51 Edward III., n. 87, 'Mons. Thomas de Hungerford, Chivaler, qi *avoit les paroles* per les communes d'Angleterre en cest Parlement,' that is, who was *speaker*, or mouthpiece.

[3] See *ante*, p. 5, note 1.

THE PERSONES TALE.

[THIS tale, or rather *Treatise on Penitence*,[1] is, probably, a translation of some *Summa Theologiæ*, commonly read in Chaucer's time, and here amplified and popularized after the peculiar manner of the writer. Although a theological tract of the time of Edward III. is not likely to become a favourite with the general reader, it is nevertheless highly interesting, to the student of English ecclesiastical history, as exhibiting the form in which Christian faith and morals were taught to the people in the Anglican church of the middle ages. The numerous references to Scripture (see vol. iii. p. 129) are, of course, translated from the *Vulgate;* but the application is sometimes so vague, and the translation so free, particularly when the Old Testament is quoted, that it has been a matter of considerable difficulty, and has in some few cases been found impossible, to refer the reader to the exact passage indicated in the text. The influence of the logic of Aristotle, with which the teaching of the schoolmen, and therefore all religious teaching, was imbued, will be observed in the scientific and technical method upon which theological terms, the virtues, and the vices, are classified and defined. This method of presenting the topics of a discourse, though it gives an air of stiffness to the composition, has the great advantage of assisting the memory; and may be traced, even at the present day, in the endless divisions of the sermons of the Presbyterian ministers both in Scotland and America. As a specimen of English prose in the fourteenth century, this treatise is of great value. It displays a force of language, a simplicity, dignity and conciseness, and at the same time a flowing rhythm, which will be looked for in vain in the succeeding ages, until the time of More, Bacon, and Hooker.

'As for the religion of our poet,' says Dryden, 'he seems to have some bias towards the opinions of Wickliffe, after

[1] In some of the MSS. it is entitled *Tractatus de Penitentiâ, pro fabulâ, ut dicitur, Personæ.*

John of Gaunt, his patron;' but this bias, as far as it can be ascertained from his writings, appears to proceed from political rather than theological considerations. The character of the Country Persone, conjectured to have been intended as a portrait of Wickliffe, bears no resemblance whatever to its supposed prototype. See vol. i. pp. 45-6. Nor is there any sufficient ground for believing that Chaucer embraced the reformer's principles, which, says the learned Dr. Todd, in his valuable edition of Wickliffe's treatises on the Church, &c., 'differ, in fact, but little from the dangerous and anti-social principles afterwards put forward by the extreme Puritans, who maintained that dominion was founded in grace, and that the ungodliness of a sovereign, or of a bishop, virtually absolved his subjects from their allegiance.' Not only is there no trace of such opinions to be discovered in any of Chaucer's works, but, on the contrary, we find in them the necessity of confession to a priest, and other doctrines and practices which were denounced by the reformer, strenuously asserted by his model Persone. That Chaucer belonged to the political party that supported Wickliffe is clear from many circumstances; but his satires on the scandalous lives of some of the clergy are by no means a proof that he adopted the theological principles of the Lollards or Wickliffites; for clerical abuses were a frequent theme even with those who are known to have been most strongly attached to the theology of the Church.]

Jer. 6°. *State super vias, et videte et interrogate de semitis antiquis quæ sit via bona, et ambulate in eâ, et invenietis refrigerium animabus vestris, etc.*'

OWRE swete Lord God of heven, that[1] no man wil perische, but wol that we comen alle to the knowleche of him, and to the blisful lif that is perdurable, ammonestith us by the prophet Jeremye, that saith in this wise: Stondeth upon the weyes, and seeth and

[1] To make this passage agree with 2 Peter iii. 9, and intelligible, it should be read, 'Owre swete Lord God of heven, that wol that no man perische, but that we comen,' &c.

axeth of olde pathes, that is to sayn, of old sentence, which is the good way, and walketh in that way, and ye schul fynde refresshyng for youre soules, etc. Many ben the wayes espirituels that leden folk to oure Lord Jhesu Christ, and to the regne of glorie; of whiche weyes, ther is a ful noble way, and ful covenable, which may not faile to man ne to womman, that thorugh synne hath mysgon fro the right way of Jerusalem celestial; and this wey is cleped penitence. Of which men schulden gladly herken and enquere with al here herte, to wyte what is penitence, and whens it is cleped penitence, and in what maner, and in how many maneres been the acciones or workynges of penance, and how many spieces ben of penitences, and whiche thinges apperteynen and byhoven to penitence, and whiche thinges destourben penitence.

Seint Ambrose[1] saith, that penitence is the pleynyng of man for the gult that he hath doon, and no more to do ony thing for which him oughte to pleigne. And som doctour saith, penitence is the waymentynge of man that sorweth for his synne, and peyneth himself for he hath mysdoon. Penitence, with certeyn circumstaunces, is verray repentaunce of man, that holt himself in sorwe and in woo for his giltes; and for he schal be verray penitent, he schal first bywaile the synnes that he hath do, and stedfastly purposen in his hert to haven schrifte of mouth, and to doon satisfaccioun, and never to do thing for which him oughte more to bywayle or to complayne, and to continue in goode werkes, or elles his repentaunce may nought avayle. For, as saith seint Isidor,[2] he is a japere and

[1] St. Ambrose was a Roman citizen, and Prefect of Milan, to which see he was tumultuously elected by the people, while still a catechumen. Being duly baptised and ordained, he distinguished himself not only by his eloquence in the pulpit, but by his courage in forbidding the Emperor Theodosius to enter the Church until he had done public penance for the cruel slaughter of the Thessalonians. He also courageously withstood the Arian heresy, though maintained by the Emperor and his court. He has left many books of Homilies on Scripture.

[2] Isidor was a Spaniard by birth, and contemporary of Pope Gre-

a gabbere, and no verray repentaunt, that eftsoone doth thing for which him oughte to repente. Wepynge, and nought for to stynte to doon synne, may nought avayle. But natheles, men schal hope that at every tyme that men fallith, be it never so ofte, that he may arise thorugh penitence, if he have grace; but certeyn it is gret doute. For as saith seint Gregory,[1] unnethe arist he out of his synne that is charged with the charge of yvel usage. And therfore repentaunt folk that stinte for to synne and forlete synne er that synne forlete hem,[2] holy chirche holt hem siker of her savacioun. And he that synneth, and verraily repentith him in his last ende, holy chirche yit hopeth his savacioun, by the grete mercy of oure Lord Jhesu Crist, for his repentaunce; but take ye the siker way.

And now sith that I have declared yow, what thing is penitence, now schul ye understonde, that ther ben thre acciouns of penitence. The first is, that if a man be baptized after that he hath synned. Seint Augustyn[3] saith, but if he be penitent for his olde synful lif,

---

gory the Great. He early distinguished himself by his zeal in opposing the Arian heresy, introduced into Spain by the Gothic invaders, and was elected to the see of Herpalis, or Seville. He flourished about the year 595.

[1] St. Gregory, called the Great, and one of the doctors of the Western Church, studied philosophy at Rome, and filled the office of Prætor; but on the death of his father adopted the monastic life. On the death of Pope Pelagius, his friend and patron, he was elected Pope by the suffrages of the people; and, among other works of zeal, planned, and sent out Augustine on, the mission to England, which resulted in the conversion of our Saxon ancestors to Christianity. His Homilies on the Gospels are admirable for the spirit of evangelical simplicity and charity which breathes in them. He flourished about the year 590.

[2] That is, who defer not their penitence till their deathbeds. The same expression occurs at the end of *The Doctour of Phisik's Tale.*

[3] St. Augustine, the celebrated doctor of the Western Church, was born at Tagaste, in Africa, and when still a youth fell into the Manichean heresy. He went to study rhetoric at Rome, and thence to Milan, whither he was attracted by the eloquence of St. Ambrose, and attended his sermons with the view of improving his rhetoric. Being by them converted to Catholic Christianity, when thirty-three years old, he was baptised by the bishop, on which occasion the hymn called

he may not bygynne the newe clene lif. For certes, if he be baptized withoute penitence of his olde gilt, he receyveth the mark of baptisme, but nought the grace, ne the remissioun of his synnes, til he have repentaunce verray. Another defaute is this, that men doon deedly synne after that thay have receyved baptisme. The thridde defaute is, that men fallen into venial synne after here baptisme fro day to day. Therof saith seint Austyn, that penitence of goode men, and of humble folk, is the penitens of every day.

The spices of penitence ben thre. That oon of hem is solempne, another is comune, and the thridde is pryve. Thilke penaunce that is solempne,[1] is in tuo maners; as is to be put out of holy chirche in lente, for slaughtre of childre,[2] and such maner thing. Another is, whan a man hath synned openly, of which synne the fame is openly spoken in the contre; and thanne holy chirche by juggement streyneth him to doon open penaunce. Comune penaunce is, that prestes enjoynen men comunly in certeyn caas, as for to goon, peradventure, naked in pilgrimage, or barfot. Prive penaunce is thilk that men doon alday for prive

---

Te Deum is said to have been composed and sung for the first time. He then returned to Africa, and was raised to the see of Hippo, where he died of a fever during its siege by the Vandals. One of the most interesting of his numerous works is his *Confessions*, which is, in fact, a minute autobiography. He flourished about the year 398. His greatest work, the *De Civitate Dei*, in which his brilliant imagination and ardent feelings are brought to bear upon theology, is afterwards quoted in this treatise.

[1] The compilers of the office for Ash Wednesday in the Book of Common Prayer were of opinion that this 'godly discipline' of solempne, or public penance, ought to be restored. It was vigorously enforced by the Presbyterians during their short term of ascendancy in the seventeenth century, and is still in use in the ecclesiastical courts in the case of slander.

[2] This seems to refer to the accidental overlaying of children by nurses held a deadly sin, because the effect of negligence. In the Rubric after the office for baptizing infants in the old ritual, is the following direction:—'Curet parochus parentes infantis admoneri, *ne in lecto secum ipsi* vel nutrices parvulum habeant, *propter oppressionis periculum.*'

synnes, of whiche we schryve us prively, and receyven prive penaunce.

Now schalt thou understonde what bihoveth and is necessarie to verray perfyt penitence; and this stondith in thre thinges, contricioun of hert, confessioun of mouth, and satisfaccioun. For whiche saith seint Johan Crisostom,[1] penitence distreyneth a man to accepte benignely every peyne that him is enjoyned with contricioun of herte, and schrift of mouth; with satisfaccioun, and werking of alle maner humblete. And this is fruytful penitence agayn tho thre thinges, in which we wraththe oure Lord Jhesu Crist; this is to sayn, by delit in thinking, by rechelesnes in speking, and by wicked synful werkyng. Again these thre wickid gultes is penitence, that may be likned unto a tre.

The roote of this tre is contricioun, that hydith him in the hert of him that is verray repentaunt, right as the roote of a tree hidith him in the eorthe. Of the roote of contricioun springeth a stalk, that bereth braunches and leeves of confessioun and fruyt of satisfaccioun. For whiche Crist saith[2] in his Gospel, doth digne fruyt of penitence, for by this fruyt may men knowe this tree, and nought by the roote that is hyd in the hert of a man, ne by the braunches ne the levys of confessioun. And therfore oure Lord Jhesu Christ saith thus, by the fruyt of hem schul ye knowe hem. Of this roote eek springeth a seed of grace, the which seed is mooder of sikurnes, and this seed is egre and

[1] St. John Chrysostom, one of the doctors of the Eastern Church, was a native of Antioch, and a lawyer; but applying himself to the study of theology, he was ordained a priest of that Church, and, on the death of Nectarius, was appointed by the Emperor Arcadius to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, where he became hated by the nobility for his fearless preaching against their prevailing vices, and was driven into exile. His Homilies on Scripture from their eloquence obtained him the surname of Chrysostom, or the golden-mouthed. He flourished about the year 398.

[2] The Persone seems here to confound the words of St. John the Baptist, Matt. iii. 8, and those of our Lord, Matt. vii. 20.

hoote. The grace of this seed springeth of God, thorugh remembraunce of the day of doom, and of the peynes of helle. Of this matier saith Salomon,[1] that in the drede of God man forleteth his synne. The hete of this seed is the love of God and the desiring of the joye perdurable. This hete draweth the hert of man to God, and doth him hate his synne. For sothe, ther is nothing that serveth so wel to a child, as the milk of his norice, ne nothing is to him more abhominable than the milk whan it is melled with other[2] mete. Right so the synful man that loveth his synne, him semeth it is to him most swete of eny thing; but fro that tyme that he loveth sadly oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and desireth the lif perdurable, ther nys to him nothing more abhominable. For sothly the lawe of God is the love of God. For which Davyd[3] saith, I have loved thy lawe, and hated wikkednesse and hate; he that loveth God, keepeth his lawe and his word. This tree saugh the prophete Daniel[4] in spirit, upon the avysioun of Nabugodonosor, whan he counseiled him to do penaunce. Penaunce is tre of lif to hem that it receyven; and he that holdeth him in verray penitence, is blessed, after the sentence of Salomon.[5]

In this penitence or contricioun men schal understonde foure thinges, that is to sayn, what is contricioun, and whiche ben the causes that moeven men to contricioun, and how he schulde be contrit, and what contricioun availeth to the soule. Thanne it is thus, that contricioun is the verray sorwe that a man receyveth in his herte for his synnes, with sad purpos to schryve him, and to doo penaunce, and never more to don synne. And this sorwe schal be in this maner, as saith seint Bernard;[6] it schal ben hevy and grevous,

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[1] Prov. xvi. 6.

[2] The words, *with other*, omitted in the Harl. MS., are restored from the Lansd.

[3] Psalm cxix. 113.

[4] Daniel ii.

[5] Prov. xxviii. 13, 14.

[6] St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaulx.—See vol. iii. p. 7, note 3.

and ful scharp aud poynaunt in herte; first, for man hath agilted his Lord and his creatour; and more scharp and poynaunt, for he hath agiltid his fader celestial; and yit more scharp and poynaunt, for he hath wratthed and agilt him that bought him with his precious blood, and hath delyvered us fro the bondes of synne, and fro the cruelte of the devel, and fro the peynes of helle.

The causes that oughten to moeve a man to contricioun ben vj. First, a man schal remembre him of his synnes. But loke that thilke remembraunce be to no delyt of him by no way, but gret schame and sorwe for his gilt. For Job[1] saith that synful men doon werkes worthy of confessioun. And therfor saith Ezechiel,[2] I wol remembre alle the yeres of my lif, in bitternesse of myn herte. And God saith in thapôcalips,[3] Remembre yow from whens that ye ben falle, for biforn that tyme that ye synned, ye were the children of God, and lymme[4] of the regne of God; but for youre synne ye be woxe thral, and foul, and membres of the feend, hate of aungels, sclaunder of holy chirche, and foode of the fals serpent, perpetual matier of the fuyr of helle, and yet more foule and abhominable, for ye trespassen so ofte tyme, as doth the hound that torneth to ete his spewyng;[5] and yet ye ben fouler for youre longe continuyng in synne, and youre synful usage, for whiche ye ben roten in youre synne, as a beest in his donge. Suche maner of thoughtes make a man have schame of his synne, and no delit; and God saith, by the prophete Ezechiel,[6] ye schul remembre yow of youre weyes, and thay schal displese yow. Sothly, synnes ben the way that leden folk to helle.

The secounde cause that oughte make a man to have

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[1] Perhaps Job xlii. 6.

[2] These are the words of Ezachioes, or Hezekiah, in Isaiah xxxviii. 15, not of Ezechiel.

[3] Rev. ii. 5.

[4] *Lymme of the regne of God* is omitted in the Harl. MS., but restored from the Lansd.

[5] 2 Pet. ii. 22.

[6] Ezech. xx. 43.

disdeyn of his synne is this, that, as seith seint Petre,[1] who so doth synne, is thral of synne, and synne put a man in gret thraldom. And therfore saith the prophete Ezechiel,[2] I wente sorwful, in disdeyn of myself. Certes, wel oughte a man have disdeyn of synne, and withdrawe him fro that thraldom and vilonye. And lo what saith Seneca in this matiere. He saith thus, though I wiste, that nere God ne man schulde never knowe it, yit would I have disdeyn for to do synne. And the same Seneca also saith, I am born to gretter thinges than to be thral to my body, or than for to make of my body a thral. Ne a fouler thral may no man, ne womman, make of his body, than give his body to synne. And were it the foulest cherl, or the foulest womman, that lyveth, and lest of value, yet is thanne synne more foul, and more in servitude. Ever fro the heigher degre that man fallith, the more is the thral, and more to God and to the world[3] vile and abhominable. O goode God! wel oughte a man have gret disdayn of such a thing that thorugh synne, ther he was free, now is he maked bonde. And therfore saith seint Austyn, if thou hast disdayn of thy servaunt, if he agilte or synne, have thou than disdeigne[4] that thou thiself schuldist do synne. Tak reward of thy value, that thou be nought to foul in thiself. Allas! wel oughte men have disdeyn to be servauntes and thralles to synne, and sore ben aschamed of hemself, that God of his endeles goodnes hath set hem in heigh estate, or geven hem witte, strength of body, hele, beaute, or prosperite, and bought hem fro the deth with his herte blood, that thay so unkindely ageinst his gentilesce quyten him so vileynsly, to slaughter of

[1] The Parson ought to have said Paul, not Peter, for he seems to refer to Rom. vi. 16. [2] No such passage can be traced in Ezechiel.

[3] These words, taken from the Lansd. MS., are not in the Harl. MS. —W.

[4] *Of thy servaunt . . . disdeigne.* These words, omitted by an evident error of the scribe in the Harl. MS., are supplied from the Lansd. MS.—W.

her oughne soules. O goode God! ye wommen that ben of so gret beaute, remembreth yow of the proverbe of Salomon,[1] that saith he likeneth a fair womman, that is a fool of hir body, to a ryng of gold that were in the groyn of a sowe; for right as a sowe wroteth in everich ordure, so wrootith sche hir beaute in stynkyng ordure of synne.

The thridde cause, that oughte to moeve a man to contricioun, is drede of the day of doome, and of the orrible peynes of helle. For as seint Jerom saith, at every tyme that I remembre of the day of doom, I quake; for whan I ete or drinke, or what so that I doo, ever semeth me that the trompe sowneth in myn eere, Riseth ye up that ben deede, and cometh to the juggement. O goode God! mochil ought a man to drede such a juggement, ther as we schul be alle, as seith seint Poul,[2] biforn the sete of our Lord Jhesu Crist; wher as he schal make a general congregacioun, wher as no man may ben absent; for certes ther avayleth non essoyne ne excusacioun; and nought oonly, that oure defaute schal be juged, but eek that alle oure werkes schul[3] be openly knowen. And, as seint Bernard saith, ther schal no pleynyng avayle, ne no sleight; we schuln give rekenyng of every ydel word. Ther schulle we have a juge that may nought be disceyved ne corrupt; and why? for certes, alle oure thoughtes ben descovered as to him, ne for prayer ne for meede he nyl not be corupt. And therfore saith Salomon,[4] the wraththe of God ne wol nought spare no wight, for praier ne for gift. And therfore at the day of doom ther is noon hope to eschape. Wherfore, as seint Anselm[5] seith, ful greet anguisch schuln the

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[1] Prov. xi. 22. [2] Rom. xiv. 10.

[3] *Be juged . . schul.* These words have been accidentally omitted in the Harl. MS. They are supplied from the Lansd. MS.—W.

[4] Prov. i. 28.

[5] Anselm was of Lombard extraction, being born at Augusta Pretoria. He was first abbot of Bec, in Normandy, and, in accordance

synful folk have at that tyme; there schal be the sterne and the wroth juge sitte above, and under him the horrible put of helle open, to destroye him that wolde not byknowe his synnes, which synnes openly ben schewed biforn God and biforn every creature; and on the lift syde, mo divelis than herte may thynke, for to hary and to drawe the synful soules to the pyne of helle; and withinne the hertes of folk schal be the bytyng conscience, and withoute forth schal be the world al brennyng. Whider schal thanne the wrecche synful man flee to hyden him? Certes he may not hyde him, he moot come forth and schewe him. For certes, as seith seynt Jerom, the erthe schal caste him out of him, and the see also, and the aer also, that schal be ful of thunder clappes and lightnynges. Now sothly, who so wel remembrith him of these tydynges, I gesse his synne schal not torne him to delit, but to gret sorw, for drede of the peyne of helle. And therfore saith Job[1] to God, suffre, Lord, that I may a while biwayle and wepe, or I go withoute retournynge to the derk lond, covered with derknes of deth, to the lond of mysese and of derknesse, wher as is the schadow of deth, wher as is noon order ne ordinaunce, but grislich drede that ever schal last. Loo, her may ye see, that Job prayde respit a while, to wepe and biwayle his trespas; for forsothe oon day of respit is bettre than al the tresor in this world. And for as moche as a man may aquyte himself byforn God by penaunce in this world, and not by tresor, therfore schuld he preye to God give him a respit a while, to wepe and to waile his trespas. For certes, al the sorwe that a man myght make fro the begynnynge of

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with the policy of the early Norman sovereigns, was nominated to the see of Canterbury by William Rufus, who, however, drove him into exile, enraged at his boldness in refusing investiture by the ring and staff. Henry I., better qualified to appreciate his talents, restored him. His *Cur Deus Homo* is the most profound investigation of the doctrine of the Atonement ever written.

[1] Job x. 20.

the[1] world, nys but a litel thing, at regard of the sorwe of helle. The cause why that Job calleth helle the lond of derknes, understondith, that he clepith it lond or eorth, for it is stable and never schal fayle, and derk, for he that is in helle hath defaut of light material; for certes the derke light that schal come out of the fuyr that ever schal brenne, schal torne him to peyne that is in helle, for it schewith him to thorrible develes that him tormenten. Covered with the derknes of deth; that is to sayn, that he that is in helle, schal have defaute of the sight of God; for certes the sight of God[2] is the lif perdurable. The derknes of deth, ben the synnes that the wrecchid man hath doon, whiche that stourben him to see the face of God, right as a derk cloud doth bitwixe us and the sonne. Lond of myseyse; bycause that there ben thre maner of defautes agains thre thinges that folk of this world han in this present lif, that is to sayn, honures, delices, and richesses. Ageyns honours han they in helle schame and confusioun; for wel ye witen, that men clepyn honure the reverence that men doon to the man; but in helle is noon honour ne reverence; for certes no more reverence schal ben doon ther to a kyng, than to a knave. For which God saith by the prophete Jeremie,[3] thilke folk that me displesen, schul be despit. Honour is eke cleped gret lordschipe. There schal no wight serven othir, but of harm and torment. Honour eek is cleped gret dignite and heighnes; but in helle schulle thay be al for-trode of develes. And God saith, thorrible develes schuln goon and comen upon the heedes of dampned folk; and this is, for als moche as the heyher that thay were

[1] *Sorwe . . . the.* Omitted in the Harl. MS. They are supplied from the Lansd. MS.—W.

[2] The sight of God, or, as theologians call it, the Beatific Vision, is represented in Scripture as the reward of the blessed.—See Job xix. 27; Rev. xxii. 4.

[3] Though the Parson quotes Jeremiah, the reference seems to be to 1 Sam. ii. 30.

in this present lif, the more schuln thay ben abatid and defouled in helle. Agayns riches of this world schuln thay han mysese of povert, and this povert shal be in iiij. thinges: in defaut of tresor; of which, as David[1] saith, the riche folk that embraseden and onedin in al here herte the tresor of this world, schuln slepen in the slepyng of deth, and nothing schuln thay fynde in her hondes of al her tresor. And moreover, the mysease of helle schal be in the defaut of mete and drink. For God saith thus by Moyses,[2] thay schul be wasted by hunger, and the briddes of helle schuln devoure hem with bitter teeth, and the galle of the dragoun schal be her drink, and the venym of the dragoun here morsels. And forther-moreover her misease schal be in defaut of clothing, for thay schul be naked in body, as of clothing, save of fuyr in which thay brenne, and other filthis; and naked schuln thay be of soule, of alle maner vertues, which that is the clothing of the soule. Wher ben thanne the gaye robes, and the softe scheetis, and the smale schirtes? Lo, what saith of hem the prophete Isaye,[3] under hem schuln be strawed motthis, and here covertours schuln ben of worms of helle. And forther-morover here disease schal be in defaute of frendes, for he is not povere that hath goode frendes; but here is no frend, for neither God ne no creature schal be frend unto hem, and everich of hem schal hate other with dedly hate. The sones and the doughtres schuln rebellen agayns the fader and the mooder, and kynrede agayns kynrede, and chiden and despisen everich of hem other, bothe day and night, as God saith by the prophete Michias,[4] and the lovyng children that whilom loveden so fleisschlich everych other wolden everych of hem eten other if thay mighten. For how schulden thay loven hem togider in the peyne of helle, whan

[1] Psalm lxxvi. 5.
[2] Deut. xxxii. 32.
[3] Isaiah xiv. 11.
[4] Micah vii. 6.

thay hated everich of hem other in the prosperite of this lif? For trustith wel, her fleisshly love was dedly hate; as saith the prophete David,[1] who so that loveth wickidnes, he hateth his soule, and who so hatith his oughne soule, certis he may love noon other wight in no manere. And therfore in helle is no solace ne frendschipe, but ever the more flesshly kynredes that ben in helle, the more cursynge, the more chydynges, and the more deedly hate ther is among hem. And fortherover thay schul have defaute of alle manere delices, for certis delices ben the appetites of thy fyve wittes; as sight, hieryng, smellyng, savoring, and touching. But in helle here sight schal be ful of derknes and of smoke, and her eyen[2] ful of teeris; and her hieryng ful of waymentynge, and of gruntynge of teeth, as saith Jhesu Crist,[3] her nose-thurles schuln ben ful of stynkyng stynk; and, as saith Ysaye[4] the prophete, here savoringe schal be ful of bitter galle; and touchyng of al here body schal be y-covered with fuyr that never schal quenche, and with wormes that never schuln deyen, as God saith by the mouth of Ysaie. And for al so moche as thay schuln nought wene that thay may deyen for peyne, and by here deth fle fro peyne, that may thay understonde in the word of Job, that saith, ther as is the schadow of deth. Certes a schadow hath the liknesse of the thing of which it is a schadow, but the schadowe is nought the same thing of whiche it is a schadowe;[5] right so fareth the peyne of helle; it is lik deth, for the horrible anguisshe; and why? for it peyneth hem ever as though men scholden deye anon; but certes thay schul not deye. For as saith seint Gregory, to

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[1] The former part of this sentence appears to refer to Prov. xii. 10.

[2] *Her eyen.* These words, which seem to give better sense, are adopted from Tyrwhitt; the Harl. MS. reads *and therfore ful of teeris.*—W.

[3] Matt. xxv. 30. [4] Isaiah lxvi. 24.

[5] The words from *schadowe* to *schadowe* are omitted in the Harl. MS., and restored from the Lansd.

wrecchid caytifs schal be give deth withoute deth, and ende withouten ende, and defaute withouten faylinge; for here deth schal alway lyven, and here ende schal evermore bygynne, and here defaute schal not fayle. And therfor saith seint Johan[1] the Evaungelist, thay schul, folwe deth, and thay schuln nought fynde him, and thay schul desire to deyen, and deth schal flee fro hem. And eek Job saith, that in helle is noon ordre of rule. And al be it that God hath creat al thing in right ordre, and no thing withoute ordre, but alle thinges ben ordeyned and noumbred, yit natheles thay that ben dampned been nought in ordre, ne holden non ordre. For the eorthe schal bere hem no fruyt; (for, as the prophete David saith,[2] God schal destroye the fruyt of the eorthe, as for hem) ne watir schal give hem no moysture, ne the aier non refreisching, ne fuyr no light. For as seth seint Basile,[3] The brennyng of the fuyr of this world schal God give in helle to hem that ben dampnyd, but the light and the clernesse schal be geve in hevene to his children; right as the goode man geve flesch to his children, and bones to his houndes. And for thay schul have noon hope to eschape, saith seint Job atte laste, that ther schal horrour and grisly drede duelle withouten ende.[4] Horrour is alway drede of harm that is to come, and this drede schal ever duelle in the hertes of hem that ben dampnyd. And therfore han thay lorn al here hope for vij. causes. First, for God that is here jugge schal be withoute mercy to hem, ne thay may not please him, ne noon of his halwes; ne they may give no thing for here raunsoun; ne thay have no voice to

[1] Rev. ix. 6. [2] Psalm cvii. 34.

[3] St. Basil, surnamed the Great, was of a noble family in Cappadocia, and began life by studying philosophy with his friend, Gregory Nazianzen, at Athens. The friends, however, soon applied their minds to sacred studies, and Basil was chosen to be his coadjutor by Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, whom he succeeded in that see. His chief works are sermons on Scripture. He flourished about the year 370.

[4] Job x. 22.

speke to him; ne thay may not fle fro peyne; ne thay have no goodnes in hem that thay may schewe to delivere hem fro peyne. And therfore saith Salomon,[1] The wikked man deyeth, and whan he is deed, he schal have noon hope to eschape fro peyne. Who so wolde thanne wel understonde these peynes, bythynke him wel that he hath deserved thilke peynes for his synnes, certes he schulde have more talent to sikyn and to wepe, than for to synge or pleye. For as that Salomon saith,[2] Who so that had the science to knowe the peynes that ben establid and ordeynt for synne he wolde make sorwe. Thilke science, as saith seint Austyn, maketh a man to wayment in his herte.

The fourthe poynt, that oughte make a man have contricioun, is the sorwful remembraunce of the good that he hath left to doon heer in eorthe, and eek the good that he hath lorn. Sothly the goode werkes that he hath left, eyther thay been the goode werkes that he wrought er he fel into deedly synne, or elles thai ben the goode werkes that he wroughte whil he lay in synne. Sothly the goode werkes that he dede er he fel into synne ben amortised, and astoneyed, and dullid by ofte synnynge; that othere goode werkes that he wroughte whil he lay in dedly synne, been outrely deede, as to the lif perdurable in heven.

Thanne thilke goode werkes that ben mortified by ofte synnyng, whiche goode werkes he dede whiles he was in charite, ne mow never quyken agayn withouten verray penitence. And thereof saith God by the mouth of Ezechiel[3] that if the rightful man retourne agayn fro his rightwisnesse and werke wikkednesse, schal he live? nay; for alle the goode werkes that he hath wrought, ne schuln never be in remembraunce, for he schal dye in his synne. And upon thilke chapitre saith seint Gregory thus, that we schuln

[1] Prov. xi. 7.

[2] It is difficult to determine what place in the writings of Solomon is here alluded to.

[3] Ezech. xviii. 26.

understonde this principally, that whan we doon dedly synne, it is for nought thanne to reherse or to drawe into memorie the goode werkes that we han wrought biforn; for certis in the werkyng of the dedly synne, ther is no trust to no good werkes that we han don biforne this tyme; that is to say, as for to have therby the lif perdurable in heven. But natheles, the goode werkes quiken agayn and comen again, and helpen and availen to have the lif perdurable in heven whan we han contricioun; but sothly the goode werkes that men doon whil that thai ben in deedly synne, for as moche as thay were doon in dedly synne, thay may never quyken. For certes, thing that never had lif, may never quyken;[1] and al be it so that thay availen not to have the lif perdurable, yit avaylen thay to abrigging of the peyne of helle, or elles to gete temporal riches, or elles that God wol the rather enlumyne and lightene the hert of the synful man to have repentaunce; and eek thay availen for to usen a man to do goode werkes, that the feend have the lasse power of his soule. And thus the curteys Lord Jhesu Crist ne wolde nought no good werk be lost, for in somwhat it schal availe. But for als moche as the goode werkes that men don whil thay ben in good lif ben amortised by synne folwyng, and eek sith that alle the goode werkes that men doon whil thay ben in dedly synne, been outrely deede as for to have the lif perdurable, wel may that man, that no goode werkes werkith synge thilke newe Frenshe[2] song, *J'ay tout perdu moun temps et moun labour*. For certis synne byreveth a man bothe goodnes of nature, and eek the goodnes of grace. For sothly the grace of the holy gost fareth lik

[1] *For certes . . . quyken.* These words, not in the Harl. MS., are added from the Lansd. MS. These omissions are so frequent that I shall not again point them out. English prose manuscripts are always much more incorrect than the verse, from causes which it would not be difficult to explain.—W.

[2] The Harl. MS. reads *freische*, which is tautology. *Frenshe* is from Tyrwhitt.

fyre that may not ben ydel; for fuyr as it forletith his werkyng, and faileth anoon, and right so when the grace faileth anoon as it forleteth his werkyng, than lesith the synful man the goodnes of glorie, that oonly is byhight to goode men that labouren and werken. Wel may he be sory thanne, that oweth al his lif to God, as longe as he hath lyved, and eek as longe as he schal lyve, that no goodnes he hath to paye with his dette to God, to whom he oweth al his lyf; for trusteth wel he schal give accompt, as saith seint Bernard, of alle the goodes that han be geven him in his present lif, and how he hath hem dispendid, nat so moche that ther schal not perische an heer of his heed, ne a moment of an hour ne schal not perische of his tyme, that he ne schal give of it a rekenyng.

The fifte maner of contricioun, that moeveth a man therto, is the remembraunce of the passioun that oure Lord Jhesu Crist suffred for us and for oure synnes. For as seith seint Bernard, whil that I lyve, I schal have remembraunce of the passioun that oure Lord Jhesu Crist suffred for us in preching, his werynesse in travayling, his temptacioun whan he fastid, his longe wakinges whan he prayde, his teeres whan he wepte for pite of good peple; the wo and the schame and the filthe that men saide to him; of the foul spittyng that men spitten en his face; of the buffettis that men gaf him; of the foule mowes and of the reproves that men to him saiden; of the nayles with whiche he was nayled to the cros; and of al the remenaunt of his passioun, that he suffred for my synnes and no thing for his gilt. And ye schal understonde that in mannes synne is every maner ordre of ordinaunce turned up-so-doun. For it is soth, that God, and resoun, and sensualite, and the body of man, be so ordeyned, that everich of thise foure schulde have lordschipe over that other, as thus: God schulde have lordschipe over resoun, and resoun over sensualite, and sensualite over the body of man. But sothly whan man synneth, al

this ordre, or ordinaunce, is torned up-so-doun; and thanne, for as moche as the resoun of a man ne wol not be subject ne obeissant to God, that is his lord by right, therfore lesith it the lordschipe that it schulde have over sensualite, and eek over the body of man; and why? for sensualite rebellith thans agayns resoun; and by that way lesith resoun the lordschipe over sensualite, and over the body. For right as resoun is rebel to God, right so is bothe sensualite rebel to resoun and the body also. And certis this disordynaunce, and this rebellioun, oure Lord Jhesu Crist bought upon his precious body ful deere; and herkeneth in which wise. For as moche as resoun is rebel to God, therfore is man worthy to have sorwe, and to be deed. This suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man, after that he was bytraysed of his disciple, and distreyned and bounde, so that the blood brast out at every nayl of his hondes, as saith seint Austyn. And fortherover, for as mochil as resoun of man wol nought daunte sensualite when it may, therfore is man worthy to have schame; and this suffered oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man, whan thay spitten in his face. And fortherover thanne, for as moche as the caytif body of man is rebelle bothe to resoun and to sensualite, therfore it is worthy the deth; and this suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for us upon the croys, wher as ther was no part of his body fre, withoute gret peyne and bitter passioun. And al this suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist that never forfeted; and thus sayd he,[1] to mochil am I streyned, for the thinges that I never deservyd; and to moche defouled for schendschip that man is worthy to have. And therfore may the synful man wel seye, as saith seint Bernard, acursed be the bitternesse of my synne, for which ther moste be suffered so moche bitternesse. For certis, after the dyvers discordaunces of

[1] It is not clear to what place in Scripture this is to be referred: probably some passage in the Psalms or Isaiah.

oure wickednes was the passioun of oure Lord Jhesu Crist ordeyned in divers thinges; as thus. Certis sinful mannes soule is bytraysid of the devel, by coveitise of temporal prosperite; and scorned by disceyt, whan he cheseth fleischly delytes; and yit is it tormentid by impacience of adversite, and byspit by servage and subjeccioun of synne, and atte last it is slayn finally. For this discordaunce of synful man, was Jhesu Crist first bytraised; and after was he bounde, that com for to unbynden us fro synne and of peyne. Than was he scorned, that oonly schulde be honoured in alle thing of alle thinges. Than was his visage, that oughte be desired to be say of al mankynde (in which visage aungels desiren to loke) vileynusly byspit. Thanne was he scourged[1] that nothing had agilt; and fynally, thanne was he crucified and slayn. Thanne was accomplised the word of Ysaye,[2] He was woundid for oure mysdede, and defouled by oure felonyes. Now, sith Jhesu Crist tok upon him thilke peyne of alle oure wikkednes, mochil oughte synful men wepe and bywayle, that for his synnes schulde Goddes sone of hevene al this endure.

The sixte thing that oughte to moeve a man to contricioun, is the hope of thre thinges, that is to sayn, forgevenes of synne, and the gifte of grace wel for to do, and the glorie of heven, with which God schal guerdoun man for his goode deedis. And for als moche as Jhesu Crist geveth us these giftes of his largesse and of his soverayn bounte, therfore is he cleped, *Jhesus Nazarenus rex Judæorum.*[3] Jhesus is for to say, saveour of savacioun, of whom me schal hope to have forgevenes of synnes, which that is proprely savacioun of synnes. And therfore seyde the aungel[4] to Joseph, thow schalt clepe his name Jhesus, that schal save his poeple of here synnes. And herof saith

[1] The Harl. MS. reads *scorned*, but the Lansd. *scourged*, which is here adopted as better.

[2] Isaiah liii. 5. [3] Matt. xxvii. 37. [4] Matt. i. 21.

seint Petir,[1] ther is noon other name under heven, that is geve to any man, by which a man may be savyd, but oonly Jhesus. Nazarenus[2] is as moche to say as florisching, in which a man schal hope, that he that geveth him remissioun of synnes, schal give him grace wel to doo. For in the flour is hope of fruyt in tyme comynge, and in forgivenes hope of grace wel to do. I was at the dore of thin herte, saith Jhesus,[3] and cleped for to entre; he that openith to me, schal have forgevenes of synne; I wol entre into him by my grace, and soupe with him by the goode workes that he schal doon, whiche werkes ben the foode of God, and he schal soupe with me by the grete joye that I schal give him. Thus schal man hope, that for his werkis of penaunce God schal give him his regne, as he bihetith him in the Gospel.

Now schal man understonde, in what maner schal be his contricioun. I say, it schal be universal and total, this is to say, a man schal be verray repentaunt for alle his synnes, that he hath doon in delyt of his thought, for delit is ful perilous. For ther ben tuo maners of consentyng, that oon of hem is cleped consentyng of affeccioun, whan a man is moeved to synne, and delitith him longe for to thinke on that synne, and his resoun aparceyveth wel that it is synne agayns the lawe of God, and yit his resoun refreyneth not his foule delit or talent, though he seth wel apertly, that it is agenst the reverence of God; although his resoun consente not to do the synne in dede, yit sayn some doctours, delyt that duellith longe it is ful perilous, al be it never so lite. And also a man schulde sorwe, namely for al that he hath desired agayn the lawe of God, with parfyt consentynge of his hert and of his resoun, for therof is no doute, that it is dedly synne in

[1] Acts iv. 12.

[2] This mode of finding mystical meanings in the names of Scripture is derived from the Jewish Cabbalists, and was carried to its utmost height by Origen.—See vol. iii. p. 9, note 5.

[3] Rev. iii. 20.

consentyng; for certis ther is no dedly synne, but that it nas first in mannes thought, and after that in his delit, and so forth into consentyng, and into dede. Wherfore say I, that many men repente hem never of suche thoughtes and delites, ne never schrive hem of it, but oonly of the dede of grete synnes outward. Wherfore I say, that suche wickid delitis and wickid thoughtes ben subtile bigilours of hem that schuln be dampned. Moreover man oughte to sorwe for his wicked wordes, as wel as his wikked dedes; for certis the repentaunce of a singuler synne, and nought repente of alle his other synnes, or elles repente him of alle his othere synnes, and not of a singuler synne, may nought availe. For certis God Almighty is al good, and therfore he forgeveth al, or elles right nought. And hereof saith seint Augustin, I wot certeynly, that God is enemy to every synnere; and how thanne he that observith oon synne, schal he have remissioun of the remenant of his other synnes? Nay. And fortherover, contricioun schulde be wounder sorwful and anguisschous, and therfore givith him God pleinly his mercy. And therfore whan my soule was anguissheous withinne me, I hadde remembraunce of God, that my prayer mighte come to him. And fortherover, contricioun moste be continuelly, and that a man have stedefast purpos to schryve him, and for to amende him of his lyf. For sothly, whil contricioun lastith, man may ever hope of forgevenes. And of this cometh hate of synne, that dèstroyeth synne bothe in himself, and eek in other folk at his power. And therfore saith David,[1] ye that loven God, hatith wikkidnesse; for trustith wel for to love God, is for to love that he loveth, and hate that he hateth.

The laste thing that a man schuld understonde in contricioun is this, wherof availith contricioun? I say, that som tyme contricioun delivereth man fro synne;

[1] Psalm xcvii. 10.

of which that David saith,[1] I say, quod David, I purposid fermely to schryve me, and thou, Lord, relesedist my synne. And right so as contricioun availith nat withoute sad purpos of schrift if man have oportunite, right so litil worth is shrifte or satisfaccioun withoute contricioun. And, moreover, contricioun destruyeth the prisoun of helle, and makith wayk and feble the strengthes of the develes, and restorith the gift of the holy gost, and of alle vertues, and it clensith the soule of synnes, and delivereth the soule fro the peynes of helle, and fro the companye of the devel, and fro the servage of synne, and restorith it to alle goodes espiritueles, into the companye and communioun of holy chirche. And fortherover, it makith him that somtyme was sone of ire, to be the sone of grace; and alle these thinges he provith by holy writte. And therfore he that wil sette his herte to these thinges, he were ful wys. For sothly he scholde not thanne in al his lyf have corrage to synne, but given his body and al his herte to the service of Jhesu Crist, and therof do him homage. For certis oure swete Lord Jhesu Crist hath sparid us so debonerly in oure folyes, that if he ne hadde pite of mannes soule, sory songe mighte we alle synge.

EXPLICIT PRIMA PARS PENITENTIÆ; ET INCIPIT SECUNDA PARS EJUSDEM.

The secounde partye of penitence is confessioun, that is, signe of contricioun. Now schul ye understonde what is confessioun; and whethir it oughte needes be doon or noon; and whiche thinges ben convenable to verray confessioun. First schalt thou understonde, that confessioun is verrey schewyng of synnes to the prest;[2] this is to sayn verray, for he moot schewe him of alle the condiciouns that ben longynge to his synne, as ferforth as he can; al mot be sayd, and nought

[1] Psalm xxxii. 6.

[2] This is one of the doctrines opposed by Wickliffe.

excused, ne hyd, ne forwrappid; and nought avaunte him of his goode werkis. And forthermore it is necessary to understonde whens that synnes springe, and how thay encresen, and whiche thay ben.

Of the springing of synnes as seint Poul[1] saith, in this wise; that right as by a man synne entred first into this world, and thorugh that synne deth, right so thilke deth entred into alle men that synneden; and this man was Adam, by whom that synne entred into this world, whan he brak the comaundement of God. And therfore he that first was so mighty, that he schulde not have deyed, bicam siththe suche on that he moste needis deye, whethir he wolde or noon, and al his progenie that is in this world, that in thilke manner synneden. Loke that in the estate of innocence, whan Adam and Eve nakid were in Paradys, and no thing schame ne hadden of her nakidnesse, how that the serpent,[2] that was most wily of alle other bestis that god hadde makid, sayde to the womman, why comaundid God to yow ye schulde nought ete of every tree in Paradys? The womman answerde, of the fruyt, quod she, of the trees in Paradys we feede us, but sothly of the fruyt of the tre that is in the myddil of Paradis God forbad us for to eten, ne not touche it, lest peraventure we schulde deye. The serpent sayde to the womman, nay, nay, ye schal not drede of deth, for sothe God wot, that what day ye ete therof youre eyen schal open and ye schul ben as goddis, knowing geod and harm. The womman saugh the tree was good to feedyng, and fair to the eyen, and delitable to sight; she tok of the fruyt of the tree and eet it, and gaf to hir housbond, and he eet it; and anoon the eyen of hem bothe openeden; and whan that thay knewe that thay were naked, thay sowede of fige leves in maner of breches,[3] to hiden here

[1] Rom. v. 12. [2] Gen. iii. 1.

[3] There is an English version of the Bible which translates the

membirs. Here may ye see, that dedly synne hath first suggestioun of the feend, as scheweth here by the neddir; and aftirward the delit of the fleisch, as scheweth here by Eve; and after that the consentyng of resoun, as schewith by Adam. For trustith wel, though so were that the feende temptid oon, Eve, that is to sayn the fleissch, and the fleissch had delit in the beaute of the fruyt defendid,yit certes til that resoun, that is to say, Adam, consentid to the etyng of the fruyt, yit stood he in thastaat of innocence. Of thilk Adam took we thilke synne original; for of him flesschly descendit be we alle and engendrit of vile and corrupt matiere; and whan the soule is put in oure body, right anoon is contract original synne; and that, that was erst but oonly peyne of concupiscence, is afterward bothe peyne and synne; and therefore be we alle i-born sones of wraththe, and of dampnacioun perdurable, if it nere baptisme that we receyven,[1] which bynymeth us the culpe. But forsothe the peyne duellith with us as to temptacioun, which peyne highte concupiscence.[2] And this concupiscence, whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man, it makith him to coveyte, by covetise of fleissch, fleisschly synne, by sight of his eyghen, as to erthely thinges, and eek coveityse of heighnesse, as by pride of herte.

Now as to speke of the firste coveitise, that is concupiscence after the lawe of oure membris, that weren lawfully maked, and by rightful juggement of God, I say, for as moche as a man is nought obeissant to God, that is his Lord, therfore is fleissch to him disobeisant

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word as in this place, hence called the 'Breeches Bible,' and prized by collectors for its rarity.

[1] This is the doctrine of the Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer, &c., 'For being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, we are hereby [by baptism] made the children of grace.'

[2] This is exactly the doctrine of the ninth of the XXXIX. Articles, 'And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated (renatis), whereby the lust of the flesh, &c., is not subject to the law of God.'

thurgh concupiscence, which that yit is cleped norissh-ing of synne, and occasion of synne. Therfore, al the while that a man hath in him the peyne of concupiscence, it is impossible but he be tempted somtyme and moeved in his fleisch to synne. And this may not faile, as longe as he liveth. It may wel wexe feble and faille by vertu of baptisme, and by the grace of God thorugh penitence; but fully schal it never quenche, that he schal somtyme be moeved in himself, but if he were al refreydit by siknes, or by malefice of sorserye, or colde drinkes. For what saith seint Poul?[1] the fleissh coveitith agayn the spirit, and the spirit agayn the fleisch; thay ben so contrarie and so stryven, that a man may nought alway do as he wolde. The same seint Poul,[2] after his penaunce, in watir and in lond; in watir by night and by day, in gret peril, and in gret peyne; in lond and in famyne and in thurst, and colde and clothles; oones almost stoned al to the deth; yit saide he, allas! I caytif man, who schal delyvere me fro the prisoun of my caytif body? And seint Jerom,[3] whan he long tyme had woned in desert, here wher as he hadde no compaignye but of wilde bestes; wher as he hadde no mete but herbes, and water to his drink, ne non bed but the nakid erthe, for which his fleisch wos as blak as an Ethiopen, for hete, and neigh destroyed for eold; yit sayde he, that the brennyng of lecchery boylid in al his body. Wherfore I wot wel sicurly that thay ben desceyved that say, thay ben not temptid in here body. Witnesse on seint Jame[4] thapostil, that saith, that every wight is tempted in his oughne concupiscence; that is to sayn, that everych of us hath matere and occasioun to be tempted

[1] Gal. v. 17. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 23; and Rom. vii. 24.

[3] St. Jerome, one of the doctors of the Western Church, was born in Dalmatia, and studied under Gregory Nazianzen at Constantinople. His most remarkable work is his Latin translation of the whole Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek. This version formed the basis of that called the *Vulgate*. He flourished about the year 378, and died in the reign of Honorius. [4] James i. 4.

of the norischyng of synne that is in his body. And therfore seint Johan the Evaungelist[1] saith, if that we sayn we be withoute synne, we deceyve ouresilf, and trouthe is nought in us.

Now schal ye understonde in what maner that synne waxith and encresceth in a man. The firste thing is thilke norisching of synne, of which I spak biforn, thilke concupiscence; and after that cometh the suggestioun[2] of the devel, that is to sayn, the develes bely, with which he bloweth in man the fuyr of fleisschly concupiscence; and after that a man bythink him whethir he wol don it or non, thilke thing to which he is tempted. And thanne if that a man withstonde and wayve the firste entisynges of his fleisshe, and of the feend, it is no synne; and if so be he do not so, thanne feeleth he anoon a flame of delit, and thanne it is good to be war and kepe him wel, or elles he wil falle anoon into consentyng of synne, and thanne wol he do it, if he may have tyme, and space, and place. And of this matere saith Moyses[3] by the devel, in this maner; the feend saith, I wol chace and pursewe the man by wickid suggestiouns, and I wil hent him by moevyng and steryng of synne, and I wil parte my prise, or my pray, by deliberacioun, and my lust schal be accomplisit in delit; I wil drawe my sword in consentynge; (for certes, right as a swerd departith a thing in tuo parties, right so consentynge departeth God fro man;) and thanne wol I sle him with my hond in dede of synne. Thus saith the feend; for certis, thanne is a man al deed in soule; and thus is synne accomplisid, by temptacioun, by delit, and by consentyng; and thanne is the synne cleped actuel.

For sothe synne is in two maneres, outher it is

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[1] 1 John i. 8. [2] The Harl. MS. reads *subjeccioun*.—W.

[3] This quotation seems, as Tyrwhitt observes, to be taken from some of the Rabbinical histories of Moses, a collection of which was published by the learned Gaulmin at Paris in 1629, and which, among other traditions, contains that alluded to by St. Jude, Epistle, verse 9.

venial, or dedly synne.[1] Sothly, whan man lovith any creature more than Jhesu Crist oure creatour, thanne it is dedly synne; and venial synne is, if a man love Jhesu Crist lesse than him oughte. For sothe the dede of this venial synne is ful perilous, for it amenisith the love that men schulde have to God, more and more. And therfore if a man charge more himself with many suche venial synnes, certes, but if so be that he som tyme discharge him of hem by schrifte, thay may ful lightly amenise in him al the love that he hath to Jhesu Crist; and in this wise skippith venial into dedly synne. For certes, the more that a man chargith his soule with venial synnes, the more is he enclyned to falle in deedly synne. And therfore let us nought be negligent to descharge us of venial synnes. For the proverbe saith, that many smale makith a gret. And herken this ensample; a greet wawe of the see cometh som tyme with so gret a violence, that it

[1] The distinction between deadly and venial sin is best expressed by explaining *deadly sin* to be that which deprives the soul of divine grace; and *venial sin* that which does not. St. Paul's doctrine is that Christians are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is the quickening or life-giving spirit; but that some sins deprive them of this life-giving spirit, which sins are, therefore, called *deadly*.—1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. To say that every sinful thought, word, or action, deprives the Christian of divine grace, would amount to saying that no one could possess it at all, because all are every day liable to sins of infirmity. But these almost involuntary infidelities, though there is no means provided for their pardon by the law of nature, are not imputed under the Christian covenant, in consideration of the merits of Christ, and are, therefore, called venial, because they are *pardoned* for the merits of Christ without a formal sacramental restoration.—1 John ii. 1. This is quite consistent with the Persones distinction; since it is sins against charity, or the love of God, which are held to deprive the soul of divine grace, and are, therefore, called *deadly*, and it is sins not inconsistent with the love of God which are pardoned at once for the merits of Christ, and which are, therefore, called *venial*. This doctrine, however, is manifestly abused when a regular classification is made of deadly and venial sins, because it inevitably leads to the supposition that as long as a man refrains from acts classified as deadly sins, he must be in a state of grace, whereas, from not possessing that charity which is the first and great commandment, he may be in a state of reprobation, though not guilty of any outward act of deadly sin. This is well put by the Persone.—See Massillon's Sermon, *Sur la Tiedeur*.

drenchith the schip; and the same harm doon som tyme smale droppis of watir, that entrith thurgh a litil creves into the thurrok, and into the bothum of a schip, if men be so negligent, that thay descharge hit nought by tyme. And therfore, although ther be difference betueen these tuo causes of drenching, algates the schip is dreynt. Right so farith it som tyme of deedly synne, and of anoyous venial synnes, whan thay multiplien in a man so gretly, that thilke worldly thynges that he loveth, thurgh which he sinneth venially, is as gret in his herte as the love of God, or more. And therfore the love of every thing that is not byset in God, ne doon principally for Goddes sake, although a man love it lasse than God, yit is it venial synne; and deedly synne, whan the love of eny thing weyeth in the hert of a man, as moche as the love of God, or more. Dedly synne is, as saith seint Austyn, whan man torneth his hert from God, which that is verray soverayn bounte, that may not chaunge and flitte, and give his herte to a thing that may chaunge and flitte; and certes, that is every thing save God of heven. For sothe, if that a man give his love, the which that he owith to God with al his herte, unto a creature, certes, as moche of love as he giveth to thilke creature, so moche he reveth fro God, and therfore doth he synne, for he that is dettour to God, ne yeldeth not to God al his dette, that is to sayn, al the love of his hert.

Now siththe man understondith generally which is venial synne, thanne is it covenable to telle specially of synnes, whiche that many a man peraventure ne demith hem no synnes, and schryveth him not of the same thinges, and yit natheles thay ben synnes; and, sothly, as clerkes writen; this is to say, at every tyme that man etith and drinkith more than suffiseth to the sustienaunce of his body, in certeyn he doth synne; and eek whan he spekith more than it needith, he doth synne; and eek whan he herkeneth nought benignely the pleynt of the pore; eek whan he is in hele of body,

and wil not faste whan other folk fasten, withouten cause resonable; eek whan he slepith more than needith, or whan he cometh by thilk enchesoun to late to holy chirche, or to other werkes of charite; eke whan he useth his wyf withoute soverayn desir of engendrure, to thonour of God, and for thentent to yelde his wyf the dette of his body; eek whan he wil not visite the sike, and the prisoner, if he may; eek if he love wyf, or child, or other worldly thing, more than resoun requireth; eek if he flatere or blaundisshe more than him oughte for eny necessite; eek if a man menuse or withdrawe the almesse of the povere; eek if he apparaylith his mete more deliciously than it nedith, or ete it to hastily by licouresnes; eek if he talke of vanitees at chirche, or at Goddis service, or that he be a talkere of ydil wordes of vanite or of vilonye, for he schal yeld of hem acount at the day of doome; eek whan he heetith or assureth to do thinges that he may nought performe; eek whan that by lightnes or foly he myssaith or scorneth his neighebor; eek whan he hath eny wicked suspeccioun of thing, that he wot of it no sothfastnesse: these thinges and mo withoute nombre ben synnes, as saith seint Austyn. Now schal men understonde, that al be it so that noon erthely man may eschiewe alle venial synnes, yit may he refreyne hem by the brennyng love that he hath to oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and by prayeres, and by confessioun, and other goode werkes, so that it schal but litil greve. For, as saith seint Austyn, gif a man love God in such a maner, that al that ever he doth is in the love of God, or for the love of God verraily, for he brenneth in the love of God, loke how moche that a drope of watir, that fallith in a furneys ful of fuyr, annoyeth or greveth the brenning of the fire, so moche in like maner annoyeth or greveth a venial synne unto a man that is perfyt in the love of Jhesu Crist. Men may also refreyne venial synne, by receyvyng of the precious body of Jhesu Crist; by receyvyng eek of holy water; by

almes dede; by general confessioun of *Confiteor* at masse, and at prime, and at complyn; and by blessing of bisschops and of prestes, and by other goode werkis.[1]

"Now it is bihovely thing to telle whiche ben dedly synnes, that is to sayn, chiveteyns of synnes; for as moche as alle thay renne in oon loos, but in divers maners. Now ben thay cleped chiveteyns, for als moche as thay ben chief and springers of all othere synnes. The roote of these seven synnes thanne is pride, the general synne and roote of alle harmes. For of this roote springen general braunches; as ire, envye, accidie or sleuthe, avarice or coveitise (to commune understondynge), glotonye, and leccherie: and everich of these synnes hath his braunches and his twigges, as schal be declarid in here chapitres folwinge.

DE SUPERBIA.

And though so be, that no man can telle utterly the nombre of the twigges, and of the harm that cometh of pride, yit wol I schewe a party of hem, as ye schul understonde. Ther is inobedience, avauntyng, ypocrisye, despit, arragaunce, impudence, swellyng of hert, insolence, elacioun, impacience, strif, contumacie, presumpcioun, irreverence, pertinacie, veinglorie, and many another twigge that I can not telle ne declare. Inobedient is he that disobeieth for despyt to the comaundementz of God, and to his sovereigns, and to his gostly fader. Avauntour, is he that bosteth of the harm or of the bounte that he hath don. Ypocrisy, is that hydeth to schewe him such as he is, and scheweth him such as he is not. Despitous, is he that hath desdayn of his neighebour, that is to say, of his even Cristen, or hath despit to doon that him ought to doon. Arragaunt, is he that

[1] That is to say, these, as being acts of penitence and faith, are means of grace, by which men are strengthened in the practice of religion and virtue.

thinketh that he hath thilke bountees in him, that he hath not, or weneth that he schulde have hem by desert, or elles he demeth that he is that he is not. Impudent, is he that for his pride hath no schame of his synne. Swellyng of hert, is whan a man rejoysith him of harm that he hath don. Insolent, is he that dispisith in his juggement alle other folk, as to regard of his valieu, and of his connyng, and of his spekyng, and of his beryng. Elacioun, is whan he may never suffre to have maister ne felawe. Impacient, is he that wil not ben i-taught ne undernome of his vices, and by stryf werreth trouthe witynge, and defendeth his folie. Contimax, is he that thorugh his indignacioun is agains everych auctorite or power of hem that been his soverayns. Presumpcioun, is whan a man undertakith and emprisith that him oughte not to do, or elles that he may not doo, and that is cleped surquidrye. Irreverence, is whan men doon not honour ther as hem ought to doon, and wayteth to be reverenced. Pertinacie, is whan man defendith his folye, and trusteth to moche to his owne witte. Vainglorie, is for to have pomp, and delit in temporal haighnes, and glorifie him in worldly estaat. Jangelyng, is whan a man spekith to moche biforn folk, and clappith as a mille, and taketh no keep what he saith.

And yit is ther a prive spice of pride, that wayteth first to be saluet er he saliewe, al be he lasse worth than that other is, paradventure; and eek wayteth or desireth to sitte above him, or to go above him in the way, or kisse the pax,[1] or ben encensed, or gon to the

[1] It was the custom in the early Church for the Christians 'to salute one another with a holy kiss,' as St. Paul directs, as a token of brotherly love; but this custom having led to scandal, it was abolished as far as the laity were concerned, and they were permitted instead to kiss in succession a plate of silver or gold, called a *pax*, because it received this *kiss of peace*. These customs were no doubt intended to abolish that feeling of *caste* which it is St. Paul's great object in the Epistle to the Romans to discourage, and which is to this day found

offringe biforn his neighebore, and suche semblage thinges, agains his deute peraventure, but that he hath his herte and his entente in such a proud desir to be magnified and honoured toforn the poeple.

Now ben there tuo maners of pride; that oon is heighnes withinne the hert of a man, and that other is withoute. Of which sothly these forsayde thinges, and mo than I have said, aperteynen to pride that is in the hert of a man; and that other spices of pride ben withoute; but natheles, that oon of thise spices of pride is signe of that other, right as the gay levesselle at the tavern is signe of wyn that is in the celer. And this is in many thinges; as in speche and .contienaunce, and in outrageous array of clothing. For certis, if ther hadde be no synne in clothing, Crist wolde not so soone have notid and spoke of the clothing of thilke riche man in the gospel.[1] And seint Gregorie saith, that precious clothing is coupable for derthe of it, and for his schortnes, and for his straungenes and disgisines, and for the superfluite, or for the inordinat skantnes of it; allas! many man may sen as in oure dayes, the synful costlewe array of clothing, and namely in to moche superfluite, or elles in to disordinat skantnes.

As to the firste synne in superfluite of clothing, which that makid is so dere, to harm of the poeple, not oonly the cost of embrowdyng, the disguising, endentyng or barryng, ounding, palyng or bendyng,[2] and semblable wast of cloth in vanite; and ther is also costlewe furring in here gownes, so mochil pounsyng of chiseles to make holes, so moche daggyng of scheris, for with the superfluite in lengthe of the forsaide gownes, traylinge in the donge and in the myre, on

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to be the most insurmountable obstacle to the reception of Christianity by the Hindoos.—BINGHAM, *Antiq.*, xv. iii. 3.

[1] Luke xvi.

[2] This passage, apparently corrupt in the Harl. MS., which reads for *disguising, guyse*, and for *ounding, swandyng*, has been corrected from Tyrwhitt.

hors and eek on foote, as wel of man as of womman, that al thilke traylyng is verraily (as in effect) wasted, consumed, thredbare, and rotyn with donge, rather than it is geven to the pore, to gret damage of the forsaide pore folk, and that in sondry wise; this is to sain, the more that cloth is wastid, the more most it coste to the poeple for the scarsenes; and forthermore, if it so be that thay wolde give suche pounised and daggid clothing to the pore folk, it is not convenient to were to the pore folk, ne suffisaunt to beete here necessite, to kepe hem fro the desperance of the firmament. Upon that other syde, to speke of the horrible disordinat scantnes of clothing, as ben these cuttid sloppis or anslets, that thurgh her schortnes ne covereth not the schamful membre of man, to wickid entent; allas! som men of hem schewen the schap and the boce of the horrible swollen membres, that semeth like to the maledies of hirnia, in the wrapping of here hose, and eek the buttokes of hem, that faren as it were the hinder part of the sche ape in the fulle of the moone. And moreover the wrecchid swollen membres that thay schewe thurgh desgysyng, in departyng of here hoses in whyt and reed, seemith that half the schameful prive membres were flayn. And if it so be that thay departe here hosen in other colours, as is whit and bliew, or whit and blak, or blak and reed, and so forth; thanne semith it, as by variaunce of colour, that half the party of his prive membris ben corrupt by the fuyr of seint Antony, or by cancre, or other such meschaunce. And yit of the hynder partye of here buttokes it is ful horrible for to see, for certis in that partie of here body ther as thay purgen her stynkyng ordure, that foule party schewe thay to the poeple proudly in despyt of honeste, which honeste that Jhesu Crist and his frendes observeden to schewen in his lif. Now as of the outrageous array of wommen, God wot, that though the visage of some of hem seme ful chaste and

debonaire, yit notifye thay, in here array of attyre, licorousnesse and pride. I say not that honeste in clothing of man or womman is uncovenable, but certis the superfluite or disordinat skantnes of clothing is reprevable. Also the synne of here ornament, or of apparaile, as in thinges that aperteynen to rydyng, as in to many delicat horses, that ben holden for delyt, that thay ben so faire, fat, and costlewe; and also in many a vicious knave, mayntened bycause of hem; and in to curious harnoys, as in sadelis, and bridlis, croupours, and peytrelle, covered with precious clothing, and riche barres and plates of gold and of silver. For whiche God saith by Zacharie[1] the prophete, I wol confounde the ryders of such horsis. These folk take litil reward of the ryding of Goddes sone of heven, and of his harneys, whan he rode upon an asse, and hadde noon other harneys but the clothing of his disciples newe. Ne rede I not that ever he rode on other beest. I speke this for the synne of superfluite, and nought for resonable honeste, whan resoun it requirith. And fortherover, certes pride is gretly notified in holdyng of gret meyne, whan thay ben of litil profyt or of right no profyt, and namely whan that meyne is felenous and daungerous to the poeple by hardynesse of lordschipe, or by way of offices; for certes, suche lordes selle thanne here lordschipe to the devel of helle, whan thay susteyne the wickidnes of here meyne. Or elles, whan these folk of low degre, as is thilke that holden hostilries, and susteyne the thefte of her hostilers, and that is in many maneres of disceytes; thilke maner of folk ben the flyes that folwen the hony, or elles the houndes that folwen the carayn. Suche forsayde folk strangelen spirituelly here lordschipes; for whiche thus saith David[2] the prophete, Wikked deth moot come upon such lordschipes, and God geve that thay

[1] Zechariah x. 5. [2] Psalm lv. 16.

moot descende into helle adoun; for in here houses ben iniquities and schrewednesses, and not God of heven. And certes, but thay do amendment, right so as Jacob gaf his benisoun to Laban[1] by the service of God, and to Pharao[2] by the service of Joseph, right so God wil geve his malisoun to such lordschipes as susteynen the wikkednes of her servauntes, but thay come to amendement.

Pride of the table apperith ful ofte; for certes riche men ben cleped to feste, and pore folk ben put away and rebuked; also in excesse of divers metis and drinkis, and namely of suche maner of bake metis and dische metis brennyng of wilde fuyr, and peynted and castelid with papire, and semblable wast, so that it is abusioun for to thinke. And eek in gret preciousnes of vessel, and in curiousnesse of vessel, and of mynstralcye, by the whiche a man is stired the more to delitis of luxurie, if so be that thay sette her herte the lasse upon oure Lord Jhesu Crist, certeyn it is a synne; and certeinly the delites mighte be so grete in this caas, that men mighte lightly falle by hem into dedly synne. The espices that sourdren of pride, sothely whan thay sourdren of malice y-magined and avised, aforn cast, or elles of usage, ben dedly synnes, it is no doute. And whan thay sourden by frelte unavysed sodeinly, and sodeinly withdrawe agayn, al be thay grevous synnes, I gesse thay ben not dedly. Now mighte men axe, whereof pride sourdeth and springeth. I say som tyme it springith of the goodes of nature, and som tyme of the goodes of fortune, and som tyme of the goodes of grace. Certes the goodes of nature stonden outher in goodes of body, or goodes of soule. Certis, the goodes of the body ben hele of body, strengthe, delivernesse,[3] beaute, gentrie, fraun-

[1] Gen. xxx. 27. [2] Gen. xxxix. 5.

[3] The Harl. MS. reads *deliverance*; but Tyrwhitt's reading has been adopted as being evidently what the context requires, *delivernesse* meaning activity.

chise; the goodes of nature of the soule ben good wit, scharp understondyng, subtil engyn, vertu naturel, good memorie; goodes of fortune been richesses, highe degrees of lordschipes, and preisyng of the poeple; goodes of grace been science, power to suffre spirituel travaile, benignite, vertuous contemplacioun, withstondyng of temptacioun, and semblable thinges; of whiche forsayde goodes, certes it is a ful gret foly, a man to pryden him in any of hem alle. Now as for to speke of goodes of nature, God wot that som tyme we have hem in nature as moche to oure damage as to oure profit. As for to speke of hele of body, certes it passith ful lightly, and eek it is ful ofte enchesoun of the siknesse of the soule. For God wot, the fleissch is a gret enemy to the soule; and therfore the more that oure body is hool, the more be we in peril to falle. Eke for to pride him in his strengthe of body, it is a foly; for certes the fleisch coveytith again the spirit; and ay the more strong that the fleisch is, the sorier may the soule be; and over al, this strengthe of body and worldly hardynes causeth ful ofte many man peril and meschaunce. Eek for to pride him of his gentrie is ful gret folye; for often tyme the gentrie of the body bynymeth the gentery of the soule; and we ben alle of oon fader and of oon moder; and alle we ben of oon nature roten and corrupt, bothe riche and pore. For sothe oon maner gentry is for to prayse, that apparailleth mannes corrage with vertues and moralitees, and makith him Cristes child; for trustith wel, over what man that synne hath maistry, he is a verray cherl to synne.

Now ben ther general signes of gentilesse; as schewyng of vice and rybaudrie, and servage of synne, in word, in werk and contenaunce, and usinge vertu, curtesie, and clennes, and to be liberal, that is to sayn, large by mesure; for thilke that passith mesure is foly and synne. And another is to remembre him of bounte that he of other folk hath resceyved.

Another is to be benigne to his goode subjectis; wherfore, as saith Senek, ther is nothing more covenable to a man of heigh estate, than debonairte and pite; and therfore thise flies that men clepen bees, whan thay make here king, thay chesen oon that hath no pricke wherwith he may stynge. Another is, a man to have a noble herte and a diligent, to atteigne to hihe vertuous thinges. Certis, also who that prideth him in the goodes of grace, is eek an outrageous fool; for thilke giftes of grace that schulde have i-torned him to goodnes and medicyne, torneth him to venym and to confusioun, as saith seint Gregory. Certis also, who that pridith him in the goodes of fortune, he is a ful gret fool; for som tyme is a man a gret lord by the morwe, that is a caytif and a wrecche er it be night? and some tyme the riches of a man is cause of his deth: and som tyme the delice of a man is cause of his grevous maledye, thurgh which he deieth. Certis, the commendacioun of the poeple is som tyme ful fals and ful brutil for to truste; this day thay prayse, to morwe thay blame. God woot, desir to have commendacioun of the poeple hath causid deth of many a busy man.

REMEDIUM CONTRA SUPERBIAM.

Now sith so is, that ye han herd and understonde what is pride, and whiche ben the spices of it, and whens pride sourdeth and springeth; now schul ye understonde which is the remedy agayns pride; and that is humilite or meekenes, that is a vertu thurgh which a man hath verray knowleche of himself, and holdith of himself no pride, ne pris, ne deynte, as in regard of his desertes, considering evermore his frelte. Now ben ther thre maners of humilite; as humilite in hert, another is humilite in his mouth, the thridde in workes. The humilite in his herte is in foure maners; that oon is, whan a man holdith himself not worth biforn God in heven; another is, whan he

despiseth nó man; the thrid is, whan he ne rekkith nought though a man holde him nought worth; the ferthe is, whan he holdeth him nought sory of his humiliacioun. Also the humilite of mouth is in fourè thinges; in attempre speche; in humbles of speche; and whan he byknowith with his owne mouth, that he is such as him thenkith that he is in herte; another is, whan he praisith the bounte of another man and nothing thereof amenusith. Humilite eek in werk is in foure maneres. The first is, whan he puttith other men tofore him; the secounde is, to chese the lowest place over al; the thrid is, gladly to assente to good counseil; the ferthe is, gladly to stonde to thaward of his sovereyns, or of him that is in heigher degre; certeyn this is a gret werk of humilite.

DE INVIDIA.

After pride now wol I speke of the foule synne of envye, which that is, as by the word of the philosophre, sorwe of other mennes prosperite; and after the word of seint Austyn, is it sorwe of other mennes wele, and joye of other mennes harm. This foule synne is platly agayns the Holy Gost. Al be it so, that every synne is agayn the Holy Gost, yit natheles, for as moche as bounte aperteyneth proprely to the Holy Gost, and envye proprely is malice, therfore is it proprely agayns the bounte of the Holy Gost. Now hath malice two spices, that is to sayn, hardnes of hert in wickednes, or ellis the fleisch of man is so blynd, that he considereth not that he is in synne, or rekketh not that he is in synne; which is the hardnes of the devyl. That other spice of envye is, whan a man warieth trouthe, and wot that it is trouthe, and eek whan he warieth the grace that God hath geve to his neighebor; and al this is by envye. Certes than is envye the worste synne that is; for sothely alle other synnes ben somtyme oonly agains oon special vertu; but certes. envye is agayns alle vertues and

agayns al goodnes; for it is sory of alle the bountees of his neighbor; and in this maner it is divers from all the synnes; for wel unnethe is ther any synne that it ne hath som delit in itself, sauf oonly envye, that ever hath in itself anguisch and sorwe. The spices of envye ben these. Ther is firste sorwe of other mennes goodnes and of her prosperite; and prosperite is kyndely matier of joye; thanne is envye a synne agayns kynde. The secounde spice of envye is joye of other mennes harm; and that is proprely lik to the devyl, that ever rejoyeth him of mennes harm. Of these tuo spices cometh bakbityng; and this synne of bakbytyng or detraccioun hath certein spices, as thus: som man praisith his neighbor by a wickid entent, for he makith alway a wickid knotte atte last ende; alway he makith a but at the last ende, that is thing of more blame, than worth is al the praysing. The secounde spice is, that if a man be good, and doth or saith a thing to good entent, the bakbiter wol torne al thilke goodnes up-so-doun to hir schrewed entent. The thridde is to amenuse the bounte of his neighebor. The ferthe spiece of bakbytyng is this, that if men speke goodnes of a man, than wil the bakbiter seyn, 'Parfay, yit such a man is bet than he;' in dispraysynge of him that men praise. The fifte spice is this, for to consente gladly and herken gladly to the harm that men speke of other folk. This synne is ful gret, and ay encresith after thentent of the bakbiter. After bakbytyng cometh grucching or murmuracioun, and som tyme it springith of impacience[1] agayns God, and somtyme agains man. Agayns God is it whan a man grucchith agayn the pyne of helle, or agayns poverte, or of losse of catel, or agayns reyn or tempest, or elles grucchith that schrewes han prosperite, or ellis that goode men han adversite; and alle these thinges schulde men

[1] The Harl. MS. reads *insapiens*.

suffre paciently, for thay come by rightful juggement and ordinaunce of God. Som tyme cometh grucching of avarice, as Judas grucched agens the Maudeleyn, whan sche anoynted the hed of oure Lord Jhesu Crist with hir precious oynement.[1] This maner murmur is swich as whan man grucchith of goodnes that himself doth, or that other folk doon of here owne catel. Som tyme cometh murmur of pride, as whan Symon the Pharise grucchid agayn the Maudeleyn, whan sche approchid to Jhesu Crist and wepte at his feet for hir synnes;[2] and somtyme it sourdith of envye, whan men discoveren a mannes harm that was prive, or bereth him on hond thing that is fals. Murmuryng eek is ofte among servauntz, that grucchen whan here soverayns bidden hem to doon leeful thinges; and for as moche as thay dar nought openly withstonde the comaundementz of here soverayns, yit wol thay sayn harm and grucche and murmure prively for verray despit; whiche wordes men clepe the develes Pater noster, though so be that the devel hadde never Pater noster, but that lewed men calle it so. Som tyme it cometh of ire of prive hate, that norischeth rancour in herte, as after-ward I schal declare. Thanne cometh eek bitternes of herte, thorugh which bitternesse every good deede of his neighebore semeth to him bitter and unsavery. But thanne cometh discord that unbyndeth alle maner of frendschipe. Thanne cometh scornynge of his neighebor, al do he never so wel. Thanne cometh accusyng, as whan man seketh occasioun to annoyen his neighebore, which that is lik the craft of the devel, that waytith both night and day to accuse us alle. Thanne cometh malignite, thurgh which a man annoyeth his neighebor privaly if he may, and if he may not, algate his wikkid wille schal nought wante, as for to brenne his hous prively,

[1] John xii. 4. [2] Luke vii. 39.

or empoysone him, or sleen his bestis prively, and semblable thinges.

REMEDIUM CONTRA INVIDIAM.

Now wol I speke of the remedies agayns thise foule things and this foule synne of envye. First is the love of God principal, and lovynge of his neighebor as himself; sothely that oon ne may nought ben withoute that other. And truste wel, that in the name of thy neighebour thou schalt understonde the name of thy brother; for certes alle we have oon fader fleisschly, and oon mooder, that is to sain, Adam and Eva; and eek oon fader spirituel, and that is God of heven. Thy neighebor artow holden for to love, and wilne him al godenesse, and therfore saith God, Love thy neighebor as thyself; that is to sayn, bothe to savacioun of lif and of soule. And moreover thou schalt love him in word, and in benigne amonestyyng and chastising, and comforte him in his annoyes, and pray for him with al thin herte. And in dede thou schalt love him in such wise that thou schalt do to him in charite, as thou woldist it were doon to thin oughne persone; and therefore thou schalt doon him noon harme in wikkid word, ne damage him in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his soule, by wikkid entising of ensample. Thou schalt nought desiren his wif, ne noone of his thinges. Understonde eek that in the name of neighebor is comprehendid his enemy; certes man schal love his enemy by the comaundement of God, and sothly thy frend schalt thou love in God. I sayde thin enemy schaltow love for Goddes sake, by his comaundement; for if it were resoun that man schulde hate his enemy, for sothe God nolde nought receyve us to his love that ben his enemyes. Agains thre maner of wronges that his enemy doth to him, he schal do thre things, as thus: agayns hate and rancour of herte, he schal love him in herte; agayns chydyng and wicked wordes, he schal pray for

his enemye; agains wikked dede of his enemy, he schal doon him bounte. For Crist saith,[1] loveth youre enemyes, and prayeth for hem that speke you harme, and for hem that yow chacen and pursewen; and doth bounte to hem that yow haten. Lo, thus comaundeth us oure Lord Jhesu Crist to do to oure enemyes; for sothely nature driveth us to love oure frendes, and parfay oure enemyes han more neede to love than oure frendes. For sothely to hem that more neede have, certis to hem schul men do goodnes. And certis in thilke dede have we remembraunce of the love of Jhesu Crist that dyed for his enemys.[2] And in als moche as thilke love is more grevous to parforme, so moche is the more gret remedye and meryt, and therfore the lovyng of oure enemy hath confoundid the venym of the devel; for right as the devel is confoundid by humilite, right so is he woundid to the deth by love of oure enemy. Certes thanne is love the medicine that castith out the venym of envye fro mannes hert. The spices of this part schuln be more largely declared in here chapitres folwynge.

DE IRA.

After envye wol I descryven the synne of ire; for sothely who so hath envye upon his neighebor, anoon he wol comunly fynde him a matiere of wrathe in word or in dede agayns him to whom he hath envie. And as wel cometh ire of pride as of envye, for sothly he that is proud or envyous is lightly wroth. This synne of ire, after the descryvyng of seint Austeyn, is wikked wille to ben avengid by word or by dede. Ire, after the philosofer, is the fervent blood of man i-quiked in his hert, thurgh which he wolde harm to him that him hatith; for certes the hert of man by eschawfyng and moevyng of his blood waxith so

[1] Matt. v. 44. [2] Rom. v. 10.

trouble, that he is out of alle juggements of resoun. But ye schal understonde that ire is in tuo maneres, that oon of hem is good, that other is wikked. The good ire is by jalousy of goodnesse, thurgh which a man is wroth with wikkidnes and agayn wikkednesse. And therefore saith a wise man, that ire is bet than play. This ire is with deboneirte, and it is wroth without bitternes; not wroth with the man, but wroth with the mysdedes of the man; as saith the prophet David,[1] *Irascimini, et nolite peccare, etc.* Now understonde that wikked ire is in tuo maners, that is to sayn, sodeyn ire or hastif ire withoute avysement and consenting of resoun; the menynge and sentence of this is, that the resoun of a man ne consentith not to thilke sodein ire, and thanne is it venial. Another ire is ful wicked, that cometh of felony of herte, avysed and cast biforn, with wickid wille to do vengeaunce, and therto his resoun consentith; and sothely this is deedly synne. This ire is so displesaunt to God, that it troublith his hous, and chaceth the holy Gost out of mannes soule,[2] and wastith and destroyeth that liknes of God, that is to say, the vertu that is in mannes soule, and put in him the likenes of the devel, and bynymeth the man fro God that is his rightful lord. This ire is a ful greet plesaunce to the devel, for it is the develes fornays that is eschaufid with the fuyr of helle. For certes right so as fuyr is more mighty to destroye erthely thinges, than eny other element, right so ire is mighty to destroye alle spirituel thinges. Loke how that fuyr of smale gledis, that ben almost dede under asshen, wolden quiken agayn whan thay ben touched with brimstone, right so ire wol evermore quyken agayn whan it is touched by pride that is covered in mannes herte. For certes fuyr may nought come out of no thing, but if it were first in the same thinge naturelly; as fuyr is drawe

[1] Psalm iv. 5; Ephes. iv. 26. [2] 1 Cor. iii. 16.

out of flintes with steel. Right so as pride is often tyme mater of ire, right so is rancour norice and keper of ire. Ther is a maner tree, as saith seint Isidor, that whan men maken fuyr of thilke tree, and cover the colis with asshen, sothly the fuyr of it wol lasten al a yer or more; and right so fareth it of rancour, whan it oones is conceyved in the hertis of som men, certein it wol lasten from oon Estren day until another Ester day,[1] and more. But certis thilke man is ful fer from the mercy of God al thilke while.

In this forsaide develes fornays ther forgen thre schrewes; pride, that ay blowith and encresith the fuyr by chidyng and wickid wordis; thanne stont envye, and holdeth the hoote iren upon the hert of man, with a paire of longe tonges of rancour; and thanne stont the sinne of contumelie or strif and cheste, and baterith and forgeth by vileyns reprevynges. Certes this cursed synne annoyeth bothe to the man himsilf, and eek to his neighebor. For sothely almost al the harm that eny man doth to his neighebour cometh thurgh wraththe. For certes, outrageous wraththe doth al that ever the devyl him comaundeth; for he ne spareth neyther for our Lord Jhesu Crist, ne his moodir; and in his outrageous anger and ire, allas! ful many oon at that tyme felith in his herte ful wikkedly, bothe of Crist, and eek of alle his halwes. Is nat this a cursed vice? Yis, certis. It bynymeth fro man his witte and his resoun, and al his deboneire lyf spirituel, that scholde kepen his soule. Certes it bynymeth eek Goddis dewe lordschipe (and that is mannes soule) and the love of his neighebor; it stryveth eek alday agayns trouthe; it reveth him eek the quiete of his hert, and subvertith his herte and his soule.

[1] Perhaps an allusion to the custom of lighting a lamp before the altar with fire struck from a flint on Easter Even, and keeping it burning till the next Good Friday.

Of ire cometh these stynkynge engendrures; first, hate, that is old wraththe; discord, thurgh which a man forsakith his olde frend that he hath loved ful longe; and thanne cometh werre, and every maner of wronge that man doth to his neighebor in body or in catel. . Of this cursed synne of ire cometh eek manslaughter. And understonde wel that homicidie (that is, manslaughter) is in divers wise. Som maner of homicidie is spirituel, and som is bodily. Spirituel manslaughter is in sixe thinges. First, by hate, as saith seint Johan,[1] He that hatith his brother is an homicide. Homicide is eek by bakbytyng, of whiche bakbiters saith Salomon, that thay have twaye swerdes with whiche thay slen here neighebors; for sothely as wikke is to bynyme his good name as his lif. Homicidy is eek in gevyng of wikkid counseil by fraude, as for to geve counseil to areyse wicked and wrongful custumes and taliages; of whiche saith Salomon, a leoun roryng and bere hungry ben like to the cruel lordschipes, in withholdyng or abrigging of the schipe or the hyre or the wages of servauntes, or ellis in usure, or in withdrawyng of almes of pore folk.[2] For whiche the wise man saith, feedith him that almost dyeth for hunger, for sothely but if thou feede him thou slest him. And eek these ben dedly synnes. Bodily manslaughter is, whan thou sleest him with thy tonge in other manere, as whan thou comaundist to slen a man, or elles givest counseil to slee a man. Manslaughter in dede is in foure maneres. That oon is by lawe, right as a justice dampnith him that is coupable to the deth; but let the justice be war that he do it rightfully, and that he do it nought for delit to spille blood, but for keping of rightwisnes. Another homicidy is doon for necessite, as whan a man sleth another him defendaunt, and that he ne may noon other wise eschape fro his owen deth; but certeynly, if he may

[1] 1 John iii. 15. [2] Prov. iii. 27, 28.

escape withoute slaughter of his adversarie, and sleth him, he doth synne, and he schal bere penaunce as for dedly synne. Eek if a man by caas or adventure schete an arwe or cast a stoon with which he sleth a man, he is an homicide eke. if a womman by negligence overlye hir child in hir sleping, it is homicide and deedly synne.[1] Eke whan man distourbith concepcioun of a child, and makith a womman outher bareyn by drinke of venenous herbis, thurgh whiche she may nought conceyve, or sleth hir child by drynkes, or elles putteth certeyn material thinges in hir secre place to slee the child, or elles doth unkyndely synne, by which man, or womman, schedith here nature in manne or in place ther as the child may nought be conceyved; or ellis if a womman have conceyved, and hurt hirself, and sleth the child, yit is it homycidie. What say we eek of wommen that mordren here children for drede of worldly schame? Certes, it is an horrible homicidy. Eek if a man approche to a womman by desir of lecchery, thurgh the which the child is perischt; or elles smitith a womman wytyngly, thurgh which sche sleeth hir child; alle these ben homicides, and horrible dedly synnes. Yit cometh ther of ire many mo synnes, as wel in word, as in werk and thought; as he that arettith upon God, and blamith God of thing of which he is himself gulty, or despisith God and alle his halwes, as doon these cursed hasardours in divers cuntrees. This cursed synne don thay, whan thay felen in here herte ful wickidly of God and his halwes. Also whan thay treten unreverently the sacrament of the auter,[2] thilke synne is so gret, that unnethe may it be relessed, but that the mercy of God passith alle his werkes, and is so gret and so benigne. Thanne cometh of ire attry anger, whan a man is scharply amonested in his schrifte to forlete synne

[1] Because done through negligence.—See *ante*, p. 13, note 2.
[2] The Holy Eucharist.

wol he be angry, and answere hokerly and angrily, to defenden or excusen his synne by unstedefastnesse of his fleisch; or elles he dede it to holde companye with his felawes; or ellis he saith the fend entised him; or elles he dide it for his youthe; or ellis his complexioun is so corrageous that he may not forbere; or ellis it is desteny, as he saith, unto a certeyn age; or elles he saith it cometh him of gentilesce of his auncetrie, and semblable thinges. Alle these maner of folk so wrappen hem in here synnes, that thay wol nought deliver hemself. For sothely, no wight that excuseth him wilfully of his synne, may nought be delivered of his synne, til that he mekely biknoweth his synne. After this thanne cometh sweryng, that is expres agayns the comaundementz of God; and this bifallith often of angir and of ire. God saith, thou schalt not take the name of thy Lord God in vayn or in ydil.[1] Also, oure Lord Jhesu Crist saith by the word of seint Mathew,[2] ne schal ye not swere in alle manere, neither by heven, for it is Goddes trone, ne by the eorthe, for it is the benche of his feet, ne by Jerusalem, for it is the cite of a gret king, ne by thin heed, for thou may nought make an her whit ne blak; but sayeth, by youre word, ye, ye, and nay, nay; and what it is more, it is of evel. Thus saith Jhesu Crist. For Cristes sake, swereth not so synfully, in dismembring of Crist, by soule, herte, boones, and body; for certes it semeth, that ye thenke that cursed Jewes ne dismembrit nought y-nough the precious persone of Crist, but ye dismembre him more. And if so be that the lawe compelle yow to swere, thanne reule yow after the lawe of God in youre swering, as saiith Jeremie,[3] c°. iiij°. Thou schalt kepe thre condicioun, thou schalt swere in trouthe, in doom, and in rightwisnes. This is to sayn, thou schalt swere soth; for every lesyng is agayns Crist; for Crist is verray trouthe.

[1] Exod. xx. 7. [2] Matt. v. 34. [3] Jeremiah iv. 2.

And think wel this, that every gret swerer, not compellid lawfully to swere, the wounde schal not depart fro his hous, whil he useth such unleful sweringe. Thou schalt eek swere in doom, whan thou art constreigned by thy domesman to witnesse the trouthe. Eek thou schalt not swere for envye, ne for favour, ne for meede, but oonly for rightwisnesse, and for declaring of it to the worschip of God, and helping of thin even[1] cristen. And therfore every man that takith Goddes name in ydil, or falsly swerith with his mouth, or elles takith on him the name of Crist, and callith himself a cristen man, and lyveth agayn Cristes lyvyng and his teching, alle thay take Goddes name in ydel. Loke eek what saith seint Peter, *Act. c°. iiij°. Non est aliud nomen sub cælo, etc.;* There is noon other name, saith seint Peter, under heven ne geven to noon men, in which thay mowe be saved, that is to sayn, but in the name of Jhesu Crist. Tak heede eek how precious is the name of Crist, as saith seint Poule, *ad Philippenses ij°. In nomine Jhesu, etc.* that in the name of Jhesu every kne of hevenly creatures, or erthely, or of helle, schulde bowe; for it is so heigh and so worschipful, that the cursed feend in helle schulde tremble to heeren it nempned. Thanne semeth it, that men that sweren so horribly by his blessed name, that thay despise it more boldely[2] than dede the cursed Jewes, or elles the devel, that tremblith whan he heerith his name.

Now certis, sith that swering (but if it be lawfully doon) is so heihly defendid, moche wors is forswering falsely, and yit needeles.

What say we eek of hem that deliten hem in swering, and holden it a gentery or manly dede to swere grete othis? And what of hem that of verray usage ne cessen nought to swere grete othis, al be the cause not worth a strawe? Certes this is horrible synne.

[1] That is, Thy fellow Christian. [2] The Hark MS. reads *bodyly*.

Sweryng sodeynly without avysement is eek a gret synne. But let us now go to thilke horrible sweryng of adjuracioun and conjuraciouns, as doon these false enchauntours or nigromanciens in bacines ful of water, or in a bright swerd, in a cercle,[1] or in a fuyr, or in the schulder bon of a scheep;[2] I can not sayn, but that thay doon cursedly and dampnably agains Christ, and the faith of holy chirche.

What say we of hem that bilieven on divinailes, as by flight or by nois of briddes or of bestes, or by sort, by geomancie, by dremes, by chirkyng of dores or crakking of howses, by gnawyng of rattis, and such maner wrecchidnes? Certis, al this thing is defended by God and holy chirche,[3] for whiche thay ben accursed, til thay come to amendement, that on such filthe bisetten here bileeve. Charmes for woundes or malady of men or of bestes, if thay take eny effect, it may be peradventure that God suffreth it, for folk schulde geve the more faith and reverence to his name.

Now wol I speke of lesynge, whiche generally is fals signifiaunce of word, in entent to descyven his even cristen. Som lesyng is, of whiche ther cometh noon avauntage to noon wight; and som lesyng torneth to the ease or profit of som man, and to damage of another man. Another lesyng is, for to save his lif or his catel. Another lesyng cometh of delit for to lye, in which delit thay wol forge a long tale, and paynte it with alle circumstaunces, wher as the ground of the tale is fals. Som lesyng cometh, for he wolde susteyne his word. Som lesyng cometh of rechelesnes withoute avisement, and semblable thinges.

Let us now touche the vice of flaterie, which cometh not gladly, but for drede, or for coveitise. Flaterie

[1] The Harl. MS. reads, *in a churche.* [2] See vol. iii. p. 69, note 4.

[3] The casuists class all observance of dreams, witchcraft, fortune-telling, &c., under breaches of the first and second precepts of the Decalogue.

is generally wrongful preysing. Flaterers ben the develes norices, that norisshen his children with mylk of losingerie. For sothe Salomon saith, that flaterie is worse than detraccioun; for som tyme detraccioun makith an hawteyn man be the more humble, for he dredith detraccioun, but certes flaterie makith a man to enhaunsen his hert and his countenaunce. Flaterers ben the develes enchauntours, for thay make man to wene of himself that he is like to that he is nought like. Thay ben like Judas, that bitraied God; and thise flaterers bitrayen a man to selle him to his enemy, that is the devel. Flaterers ben the develes chapeleyns, that singen ay *Placebo*.[1] I rekene flaterie in the vices of ire; for ofte tyme if oon man be wroth with another, thanne wol he flatere som man to mayntene him in his querel.

Speke we now of such cursyng as cometh of irous hert. Malisoun generally may be said every maner power of harm; such cursyng bireveth man fro the regne of God. as saith seint Poule.[2] And ofte tyme such cursyng wrongfully retourneth agayn to hym that curseth, as a bird retourneth agayn to his owne nest. And over alle thinges men oughten eschewe to cursen here oughne children, and give to the devel here engendrure, as ferforth as in hem is; certis it is gret peril and gret synne.

Let us thanne speke of chydynge and reproche, whiche that ben ful grete woundes in mannes hert, for they unsewe the semes of frendschipe in mannes herte; for certis, unnethe may a man plainly ben accordid with him that him openly revyled, reproved, and disclaundrid; this is a ful grisly synne, as Crist saith in the Gospel. And takith keep now, that he that reproveth his neighebor, outher he reproveth him by som harm of peyne, that he hath upon his body, as mesel, croked harlot; or by som synne that he doth.

[1] See vol. ii. p. 116, note 1.

[2] 1 Cor. vi. 10.

Now if he repreve him by harm of peyne, thanne tornith the reproef to Jhesu Crist; for peyne is sent by the rightwis sonde of God, and by his suffraunce, be it meselrie, or many other maladies; and if he repreve him uncharitably of synne, as thou holour, thou dronkelewe harlot, and so forth, thanne aperteyneth that to the rejoysing of the devel, that ever hath joye that men doon synne. And certis, chidyng may nought come but out of a vileins herte, for after the abundaunce of the herte speketh the mouth ful ofte.[1] And ye schal understonde, that loke by any way, whan any man schal chastise another, that he be war fro chidyng or reprevyng; for trewely, but he be war, he may ful lightly quiken the fuyr of anger and of wraththe, which that he schulde quenchen; and peraventure sleth, that he mighte chaste with benignite. For, as sayth Salomon,[2] the amiable tonge is the tree of lif; that is to sayn, of life espirituel. And sothely, a dislave tonge sleth the spirit of him that repreveth, and also of him which is repreved. Lo, what saith seint Augustyn, ther is no thing so lik the fendes child, as he that ofte chideth. Seint Poule[3] seith eek, a servaunt of God bihoveth nought to chide. And though that chidyng be a vileins thing bitwixe alle maner folk, yit is it certes more uncovenable bitwix a man and his wif, for ther is never rest. And therfore saith Salomon,[4] an hous that is uncovered in rayn and droppyng, and a chidyng wyf, ben like. A man, that is in a dropping hous in many partes, though he eschewe the dropping in oon place, it droppith on him in another place; so farith it by a chydinge wyf, but sche chide him in oon place, sche wol chide him in another. And therfore better is a morsel of bred with joye, than an hous ful of delices with chyding, seith Salomon.[5] Seint Poul[6] saith, o ye wommen, be ye sugettis

[1] Matt. xii. 34. [2] Prov. xv. 4. [3] 2 Tim. ii. 24.
[4] Prov. xxvii. 15. [5] Prov. xvii. 1. [6] Coloss. iii. 18.

to youre housbondes as bihovith in God; and ye men, loveth youre wyves.

After-ward speke we of scornyng, which is a wikked thing, and sinful, and namely whan he scornith a man for his goode workes; for certes, suche scorners faren lik the foule toode, that may nought endure the soote smel of the vine roote, whan it florischith. These scorners ben partyng felawes with the devel, for thay han joye whan the devel wynneth, and sorwe whan he leseth. Thay ben adversaries of Jhesu Crist, for thay haten that he loveth, that is to say, savacioun of soule.

Speke we now of wikked counseil; for he that wickid counseil giveth he is a traytour, for he deceyveth him that trusteth in him, *ut Achitofel ad Absalonem.*[1] But natheles, yet is his wikkid counseil first agens himself. For, as saith the wise man, every fals lyvyng hath this proprete in himself, that he that wil annoye another man, he annoyeth first himself. And men schul understonde, that man schulde nought take his counseil of fals folk, ne of angry folk, or grevous folk, ne of folk that loven specially to moche her oughne profyt, ne in to moche worldly folk, namely, in counselyng of manues soule.

Now cometh the synne of hem that sowen and maken discord amonges folk, which is a synne that Crist hateth outrely; and no wondir is, for God died for to make concord. And more schame do thay to Crist, than dede thay that him crucifiede. For God loveth bettre, that frendschipe be amonges folk, thanne he dide his owne body, which that he gaf for unite.[2] Therfore ben thay likned to the devel, that ever ben aboute to make discord.

Now comith the sinne of double tonge, suche as speken faire biforn folk, and wikkedly bihynde; or elles thay make semblaunt as though thay speke of good

[1] 2 Sam. xvii. [2] John xvii. 21.

entencioun, or ellis in game and play, and yit thay speke in wikked entent.

Now cometh the wreying of counseil, thurgh which a man is defamed; certes unnethe may he restore that damage. Now cometh manace, that is an open foly; for he that ofte manaceth, he threttith more than he may parfourme ful ofte tyme. Now cometh idel wordes, that is withoute profyt of him that spekith the wordes, and eek of him that herkeneth tho wordes; or elles ydel wordes ben tho that ben needeles, or withouten entent of naturel profyt. And al be it that ydil wordes ben som tyme venial synne, yit schulde men doute hem for we schuln give rekenynge of hem bifore God. Now comith jangeling, that may nought be withoute synne; and, as saith Salomon[1] it is a signe of apert folie. And therfore a philosophre said, whan men askid him how men schulde plese the poeple, and he answerde, do many goode werkes, and spek fewe jangeles. After this cometh the synne of japers, that ben the develes apes, for thay maken folk to laughen at here japes or japerie, as folk doon at the gaudes of an ape; suche japes defendith seint Poule.[2] Loke how that vertuous and holy wordes conforten hem that travailen in the service of Crist, right so conforten the vileins[3] wordes and knakkis and japeries hem that travayle in the service of the devyl. These ben the synnes that cometh of ire, and of other synnes many mo.

REMEDIUM CONTRA IRAM.

Remedye agayns ire, is a vertue that men clepe mansuetude, that is deboneirte; and eek another vertue that men clepe pacience or sufferaunce. Debonairete withdrawith and restreigneth the stiringes and the moevynges of mannys corrage in his herte, in such manere, that thai ne skip not out by anger ne by ire. Suffraunce suffrith swetely al the annoyaunce and the

[1] Eccles. v. 3. [2] Ephes. v. 4. [3] The Harl. MS. reads *violent*.

wronges that men doon to man out-ward. Seint Jerom saith thus of debonairte, that it doon non harm to no wight, ne saith; ne for noon harm that men doon ne sayn, he ne eschaufith nought agayns resoun. This vertu comith som tyme of nature; for, as saith the philosopher, man is a quik thing, by nature debonaire, and tretable to goodnesse; but whan debonairete is enformed of grace, than is it the more worth.

Pacience that is another remedie agains ire, is a vertu that suffreth swetely every mannes goodnes, and is not wroth for noon harm that is doon to him. The philosopher saith, that pacience is thilke vertue that sufferith deboneirly alle the outrages of adversite and every wickid word. This vertue makith a man lik to God, and makith him Goddes oughne dere child, as saith Crist.[1] This vertu destroyeth thin enemy. And therfore saith the wise man, if thou wolt venquisch thin enemy lerne to suffre. And thou schalt understonde, that man suffrith foure maners of grevaunces in out-ward thinges, agains whiche he moot have four maners of pacience. The firste grevaunce is of wicked wordes. Thilke suffred Jhesu Crist, withoute grucching, ful paciently, whan the Jewes despised him and reproved him ful ofte. Suffre thou therfore paciently, for the wise man saith, if thou strive with a fool, though the fool be wroth, or though he laughhe, algate thou schalt have no rest. That other grevaunce out-ward is to have damage of thi catel. Theragayn suffred Crist ful paciently, whan he was despoylid of al that he had in his lif, and that nas but his clothis.[2] The thridde grevaunce is a man to have harm in his body. That suffred Crist ful paciently in al his passioun. The ferthe grevaunce is in outrageous labour in werkis; wherfore I say, that folk that maken here servauntz to travaile to grevously, or out of tyme, as on haly dayes, sothely thay doon greet synne.

[1] Matt. v. 9. [2] John xix. 23.

Hereagainst suffred Crist ful paciently, and taughte us pacience, whan he bar upon his blisful schulder the croys[1] upon which he schulde suffre despitous deth. Here may men lerne to be pacient; for certes, nought oonly cristen men ben pacient for the love of Jhesu Crist, and for guerdoun of the blisful life that is pardurable, but the olde paynymes, that never were cristen, comaundedin and useden the vertu of pacience. A philosopher upon a tyme, that wolde have bete his disciple for his grete trespas, for which he was gretly amoeved, and brought a yerde to scourge the child, and whan the child saugh the yerde, he sayde to his maister, 'what thenke ye to do?' 'I wolde bete the,' quod the maister, 'for thi correccioun.' 'Forsothe,' quod the child, 'ye oughte first correcte youresilf, that han lost al youre pacience for the gilt of a child.' 'Forsothe,' quod the maister al wepyng, 'thou saist soth; have thou the yerde, my deere sone, and correcte me for myn impacience.' Of pacience cometh obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist, and to alle hem to which him oughte to be obedient in Crist. And understonde wel, that obedience is parfyt, whan a man doth gladly and hastily with good herte outrely al that he scholde do. Obedience is generally to performe the doctrine of God, and of his soveraignes, to whiche him oughte to ben obeissant in alle rightwisnes.

DE ACCIDIA.

After the synne of envye and ire, now wol I speke of accidie; for envye blendith the hert of a man, and ire troublith a man, and accidie makith him hevy, thoughtful, and wrawe. Envye and ire maken bitternes in herte, which bitternesse is mooder of accidie, and bynimith the love of alle goodnes; thanne is accidie the anguische of a trouble hert. And seint Augustyn saith, it is annoye of goodness and annoye of harme. Certes this is a damp-

[1] John xix. 17.

nable synne, for it doth wrong to Jhesu Crist, in as mocht as it bynymeth the service that we ought to do to Crist with alle diligence, as saith Salomon;[1] but accidie doth noon such diligence. He doth alle thing with anoy, and with wraweness,[2] slaknes, and excusacioun, and with ydelnes and unlust; for which the book saith, accursed be he that doth the service of God necligently. Than is accidie enemy to every astaat of man. For certes thestat of man is in thre maners; either it is thestat of innocence, as was thastate of Adam, biforn that he fel into synne, in which estate he is holden to worche, as in herying and honouryng of God. Another astat is thestate of sinful man; in which estate men ben holden to labore in praying to God for amendement of her synnes, and that he wolde graunte hem to rise out of here synnes. Another estaat is thestate of grace, in which he is holde to werkis of penitence; and certes, to alle these thinges is accidie enemye and contrarie, for it loveth no busynes at al. Now certis, this foule synne accidie is eek a ful gret enemy to the liflode of the body; for it hath no purveaunce agens temporal necessite, for it forslowthith, and forsluggith, and destroyeth alle goodes temporels by rechelesnes.

The ferthe thing is that accidie is like hem that ben in the peyne of helle, bycause of her slouthe and of her hevynes; for thay that ben dampned, ben so bounde, that thay may nought wel do ne wel thenke. Of accidie cometh first, that a man is annoyed and encombrid for to do eny goodnes and makith that God hath abhominacioun of such accidie, as saith seint Johan.[3]

Now cometh slouthe, that wol suffre noon hardnes ne no penaunce; for sothely, slouthe is so tendre and so delicat, as saith Salomon,[4] that he wol suffre noon

[1] Eccles. ix. 10.
[2] The Harl. MS. reads *draweness*.
[3] Rev. iii. 16.
[4] Prov. xxi. 25.

hardnes ne penaunce, and therfore he schendeth al that he doth. Agayns this roten hertid synne of accidie and of slouthe schulden men exercise hemself to do goode werkes, and manly and vertuously cacchin corrage wel to doo, thinking that oure Lord Jhesu Crist quiteth every good dede, be it never so lyte. Usage of labour is a ful greet thing; for it makith, as saith seint Bernard, the laborer to have stronge armes and harde synewes; and slouthe maketh hem feble and tendre. Thanne cometh drede to bygynne to werke eny goode deedes; for certes, who that is enclined to don synne, him thinkith it is so gret emprise for to undertake to doon werkes of goodnes, and castith in his herte that the circumstaunces of goodnes ben so grevous and so chargeaunt for to suffre, that he dare not undertake to doon werkes of goodnes,[1] as saith seint Gregory.

Now cometh wanhope, that is, despair of the mercy of God, that cometh som tyme of to moche outrageous sorwe, and som tyme of to moche drede, ymagynynge that he hath do so moche synne that it will not availe him, though he wolde repent him, and forsake synne; thurgh which despeir or drede, he abandounith al his herte to alle maner synne, as saith seint Augustin. Whiche dampnable synne, if ther it continue unto his lyves ende, it is clepped the synnyng of the holy gost. This horrible synne is so perilous, that he that is despaired, ther is no felonye, ne no synne, that he doutith for to do, as schewed wel by Judas. Certes, above alle synnes than is this synne most displesant to Crist, and most adversarie. Sothely, he that despeirith him, is like the coward campioun recreaunt, that seith recreaunt[2] withoute neede. Allas! allas! needeles is he recreaunt, and needeles despaired. Certes, the mercy

[1] From the words *and casteth* to *workes of goodness* are supplied from Tyrwhitt, not being found in the Harl. MS.

[2] The words by which the knight in the trial by battle acknowledged himself defeated.

of God is ever redy to the penitent, and is above alle his werkes. Allas! can not a man bythenk him on the Gospel of seint Luk, wheras Crist[1] saith, that as wel schal ther be joye in heven upon a synful man that doth penitence, as upon nynety and nyne that ben rightful men that needen no penitence? Loke forther in the same Gospel,[2] the joye and the fest of the goode man that had lost his sone, whan the sone with repentaunce was torned to his fader. Can not thay remembre eek that as saith seint Luk, xxiij°, how that the thef that was hangid biside Jhesu Criste, sayde, Lord, remembre of me, whan thou comest into thy regne? For sothe saith Crist, to-day thou schalt be with me in paradis. Certis, ther is noon so horrible synne of man, that it ne may in his lif be destroyed with penitence, thorugh vertue of the passioun of the deth of Crist. Allas! what needith it man thanne to be despaired, sith that his mercy is so redy and large? Aske and have.[3] Thanne cometh sompnolence, that is, sluggy slumbring, which makith a man ben hevy and dul in body and in soule, and this synne cometh of slouthe; and certes, the tyme that by way of resoun man schulde nought slepe, that is by the morwe, but if ther were cause resonable. For sothely the morwe tyde is most covenable to a man to say his prayers, and for to thenk upon his God, and to honoure God, and to geve almes to the pore that first cometh in the name of Crist. Lo what saith Salomon;[4] who so wol by the morwe arise and seeke me, schal fynde me. Than cometh negligence that rekkith of nothing. And how that ignoraunce be moder of alle harm, certis, necgligence is the norice. Necligence doth no force, whan he schal doon a thing, whethir he doo it wel or baddely.

Of the remedy of these tuo synnes, as saith the wise

[1] Luke xv. 7.
[2] Luke xv. 22.
[3] John xvi. 24.
[4] Prov. viii. 17.

man, that he that dredith God, he sparith nought to do that him ought to don; and he that lovith God, wol do diligence to plese God by his werkis and abounde himself, with alle his might, wel for to doon. Thanne comith ydelnes, that is the gate of alle harmes. An ydil man is like an hous that hath noone walles; the develes may entre on every syde or schete at him at discovert by temptaciouns on every syde. This ydelnes is the thurrok of alle wickid vileyns thoughtes, and of alle jangles, tryfles, and of alle ordure. Certes the heven is geven to hem that wol laboure and nought to ydil folk. Eke David saith,[1] that thay ne ben not in the labour of men, ne thay schul not be wiped with men, that is to sain, in purgatorie. Certis thanne semeth it that thay schal be tormentid with the devel in helle, but if thay don penitence.

Thanne comith the synne that men clepe *tarditas*, as whan a man is so latrede or tarying er he wil torne to God; and certis, that is a gret foly. He is like him that fallith into the diche, and wol not arise. And this vice cometh of a fals hope, that he thinkith he schal lyve longe; but that hope fayleth full ofte.

Thanne comith laches, that is, he that when he bigynneth any good werk, anoon he wol forlete it and stynte, as doon thay that han eny wight to governe, and ne take of hem no more keep anoon as thay fynde eny contrarie or eny anoy. These ben the newe schepherdes, that leten her schep wityngely go renne to the wolf, that is in the breres, or don no force of her oughne governaunce. Of this cometh povert and destruccioun, bothe of spirituel and of temporel thinges. Thanne cometh a maner coldenesse, that freseth al the hert of man. Thanne cometh undevocioun thurgh which a man is so blunt, and as saith seint Bernard, he hath such a langour in soule, that he may neyther rede ne synge in holy chirche, ne heere ne thinke on

[1] Psalm xlix. 7, 8.

devocioun in holy chirche, ne travayle with his hondes in no good werk, that nys to him unsavory and al apalled. Thanne waxith he slowe and slombry, and soone wol he be wroth, and soone is enclined to hate and to envye. Thanne cometh the synne of worldly sorwe such as is clepid *tristitia*, that sleth man, as saith seint Poule.[1] For certis such sorwe werkith to the deth of the soule and of the body also, for therof cometh, that a man is anoyed of his oughne lif, which sorwe schorteth ful ofte the lif of a man, or that his tyme is come by way of kynde.

REMEDIUM CONTRA ACCIDIAM.

Agains this horrible synne of accidie, and the braunches of the same, ther is a vertu that is cleped *fortitudo* or strengthe, that is, an affeccioun thurgh which a man despiseth alle noyous thinges. This vertu is so mighty and so vigurous, that it dar withstonde mightily the devel, and wisely kepe himself from perils that ben wiched, and wrastil agains the assautes of the devel; for it enhaunsith and enforceth the soule, right as accidie abateth it and makith it feble; for this *fortitudo* may endure with long sufferaunce the travailes that ben covenables. This vertu hath many spices; the first is cleped magnanimite, that is to sayn gret corrage. For certis ther bihoveth gret corrage agains accidie, lest that it ne swolwe not the soule by the synne of sorwe, or destroye it by wanhope. This vertu makith folk undertake harde and grevous thinges by her owne wille, willfuly and resonably. And for als moche as the devel fighteth agaynst a man more by queyntise and by sleight than by strengthe, therfore many a man schal ageinstonde him by witte, and by resoun, and by discrecioun. Thanne is ther the vertu of faith, and hope in God and in his seintes, to acheven[2]

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 10.

[2] The Harl. MS. reads *eschew*, which does not agree with the context.

and to accomplice the goode werkes, in the whiche he purposith fermely to continue. Thanne cometh seurte or sikernes, and that is whan a man doutith no travaile in tyme comyng of good werk that a man hath bygonne. Thanne cometh magnificence, that is to say, whan a man doth and performith grete werkes of goodnesse that he hath bygonne, and that is thend why that men schulden do goode werkes. For in the accomplising of grete goode werkes lith the grete guerdoun. Thanne is ther constaunce, that is stablenes of corrage, and this schulde ben in herte by stedefast faith, and in mouthe and in berying, and in cheer, and in deede. Eek ther ben mo special remedies agayns accidie, in dyvers werkis, and in consideracioun of the peyne of helle and of the joye of heven, and in the trust of the hyhe grace of the holy gost, that wil geve him might to parforme his good entent.

DE AVARITIA.

After accidie I wil speke of avarice, and of coveytise; of whiche synne saith seint Poule,[1] that the roote of alle eveles and harmes is coveytise. For sothely whan the hert of man is confoundid in itself and troublid, and that the soule hath lost the comfort of God, thanne seekith he an ydel solas of worldly thinges. Avarice, after the descripcioun of seint Austyn, is a likerousnes in hert to have erthely thinges. Some other folk sayn, that avarice is for to purchase many erthely thinges, and no thing geve to hem that han neede. And understonde, that avarice ne stont not oonly in lond ne in catel, but som tyme in science and in glorie, and eny maner outrageous thinges is avarice. And the difference bytwixe avarice and coveytise is this: coveitise is for to coveyte suche thinges as thou hast not; and avarice is to withholde and kepe suche thinges as thou hast, withoute rightful neede. Sothely,

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 10.

this avarice is a synne that is ful dampnable, for al holy writ curseth it, and spekith agayn that vice, for it doth wrong to Jhesu Crist; for it bireveth him the love that men to him owen, and turnith it bakward agayns al resoun, and makith that the avarous man hath more hope in his catel than in Jhesu Crist, and doth more observaunce in keping of his tresour, than he doth in the service of Jhesu Crist. And therfore saith seint Poule,[1] *ad Ephes.* that an averous man is in the thraldom of ydolatrie.

What difference is ther bitwen an ydolaster and an avarous man, but that an ydolaster peradventure hadde but a mawment or tuo, and the avarous man hath manye? for certes, every floreine in his coffre is his mawmet. And certes, the synne of mawmetrie is the firste thing that God defendith in the ten comaundementz, as berith witnes in *Exod. cap.* xx, Thou schalt have noone false goddes biforn me, ne thou schalt make to the no grave thing. Thus is he an averous man, that loveth his tresor toforn God, and an idolaster. Thurgh his cursed synne of avarice and coveytise comen these harde lordschipes, thurgh whiche men ben destreyned by talliages,[2] custumes, and cariages, more than here duete of resoun is; and elles take thay of here bondemen amercimentes, whiche mighte more resonably ben callid extorciouns than mercymentis. Of whiche mersyments and raunsonyng of bondemen, some lordes stywardes seyn, that it is rightful, for as moche as a cherl hath no temporel thing that it nys his lordes, as thay sayn. But certes, thise lordeshipes doon wrong, that bireven here bondemen thinges that thay never gave hem. *Augustinus de Civitate Dei, libro* ix. Soth is the condicioun of thraldom, and the firste cause of thraldom is sin. *Genes.* v.

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[1] Ephes. v. 5.

[2] These are the names of the different taxes which the feudal barons exacted from their tenants and bondsmen.

Thus may ye seen, that the gilt deserved thraldom, but not nature. Wherfore these lordes schulden nought to moche glorifie in here lordschipes, sith that by naturel condicioun thay ben nought lordes of here thralles, but for thraldom com first by the desert of synne. And fortherover, ther as the lawe sayth, that temporel goodes of bondefolk been the goodes of her lordes; ye, that is to understonde, the goodes of the emperour, to defende hem in here right, but not to robbe hem ne to reve hem. And therfore seith Seneca, thi prudence schulde live benignely with thi thrallis. Thilke that thay clepe thralles, ben Goddes poeple; for humble folk ben Cristes frendes; thay ben contubernially with the Lord. Thenk eek as of such seed as cherles springen of such seed springe lordes; as wel may the cherl be saved as the lord. The same deth that takith the cherl, such deth takith the lord. Wherfore I rede, do right so with thi cherl as thou woldist thi lord dide with the, if thou were in his plyt. Every sinful man is a cherl as to synne. I rede the certes, thou lord, that thou werke in such a wise with thy cherles that thay rather love the than drede the. I wot wel, ther is degre above degre, as resoun is and skil, that men don her devoir ther as it is dewe; but certes, extorciouns, and despit of oure undirlinges, is dampnable.

And forthermore understonde wel, that conquerours or tyrauntes maken ful ofte thralles of hem that born ben of als royal blood as ben thay that hem conqueren. This name of cherldom was never erst couth til Noe sayde that his sone Chanaan schulde be thral of his bretheren for his synne.[1] What say we thanne of hem that pylen and doon extorciouns to holy chirche? Certis, the swerdes that men geven first to a knight whan he is newe dubbyd, signifieth faith, and that he

[1] The reference here ought apparently to be to Gen. ix. 26, and not to Gen. v.

schulde defende holy chirche, and not robbe it ne pyle it; and who so doth is traitour to Crist. And as seith seint Austin, thay ben the develes wolves, that stranglen the scheep of Jhesu Crist, and doon wors than wolves; for sothely, whan the wulf hath ful his wombe, he stintith to strangle scheep; but sothly, the pilours and the destroyers of the goodes of holy chirche ne doon nought so, for thai stinte never to pile. Now as I have sayd, sith so is, that synne was first cause of thraldom, thanne is it thus, that ilke tyme that all this world was in synne, thanne was al this world in thraldom, and in subjeccioun; but certis, sith the tyme of grace com, God ordeyned that somme folk schulde be more heigh in estaate and in degre, and somme folkes more lowe, and that everich schulde be served in here estate and in degree. And therfore in somme contrees there thay ben thralles, whan thay han turned hem to the faith, thay make here thralles free out of thraldom.[1] And therfor certis the lord oweth to his man, that the man owith to the lord. The pope callith himself servaunt of servaunts of God. But for as moche as thestaat of holy chirche ne might not have ben, ne the commune profit might nought have ben kepte, ne pees ne reste in erthe, but if God had ordeyned som man of heiher degre, and some men of lower, therfore was soveraignte ordeyned to kepe, and to mayntene, and defende her underlynges or her subjectis in resoun, as ferforth as it lith in her power, and not to destroye ne confounde hem. Wherfore I say, that thilke lordes that be like wolves, that devouren the possessioun or the catel of pore folk wrongfully withoute mercy or mesure, thay schul receyve by the same mesure that thay han mesured to pover folk the mercy of Jhesu Crist, but if it be amendid. Now cometh deceipt bitwixe marchaunt and marchaunt. And thou schalt

[1] All this bears out Mr. Macaulay's assertion, before alluded to—vol. ii. p. 122, note 1—that the teaching of the Church gradually extinguished slavery in Europe.—See *Hist. of Engl.*, vol i. c. 1.

understonde that marchaundise is in tuo[1] maneres, that oon is bodily, and that other is gostly; that oon is honest and leful, and that other is dishonest and unleful. Of thilke bodily marchaundise that is honest and leful is this, that ther as God hath ordeyned that a regne of a cuntre is suffisaunt to himself, thanne is it honest and leful that of the abundaunce of this contre men helpe another cuntre that is more needy; and therfore ther moote be marchauntz to bringe fro that oon cuntre to that other her merchaundise. That other marchaundise, that men hauntyn with fraude, and treccherie, and deceipt, with lesynges and fals othis, is cursed and dampnable. Espirituel marchaundize is proprely symonie, that is ententyf desire to beye thing espirituel, that is, thing that apperteyneth to the seintuarie of God, and to the cure of the soule. This desire, if so be that a man do his diligence to parforme it, al be it that his desir take noon effect, yit is it to him a dedly synne; and if he be ordrid, he is irreguler. Certis, symonye is clepid of Symon Magus,[2] that wolde han bought for temporel catel the gifte that God had given by the holy gost to seint Petir and to thapostlis; and therfor understonde, that bothe he that sellith and he that bieth thinges espirituels ben cleped symonials, be it by catel, be it by procurement, or by fleisshly prayere of his frendes, either fleisshly frendes or spirituel frendes, fleisschly in tuo maneres, as by kynrede or other frendes. Sothely, if thay pray for him that is not worthy and able, if he take the benefice it is symonie; and if he be worthy and able, it is non. That other maner is, whan man, or woman, prayen for folk to avaunce hem oonly for wikkid fleisshly affeccioun that thay have unto the persone, and that is ful symonye. But certis, in service, for whiche men given thinges espirituels unto her servauntes, it moste ben understonde, that the service

[1] The Harl. MS. reads in *many maneres*.

[2] Acts viii. 18.

moste be honest, and ellis not, and eek that it be withoute bargaynynge, and that the persone be able. For, as saith seint Damase,[1] alle the synnes of this world, at the reward of this synne, is a thing of nought, for it is the gretteste synne that may be after the synne of Lucifer and of Antecrist; for by this synne God forlesith the chirche and the soule, that he bought with his precious blood, by hem that geven chirches to hem that ben not digne, for thay putten in theves, that stelen the soules of Jhesu Crist, and destroyen his patrimoigne. By suche undigne prestis and curates han lewed men lasse reverence of the sacrament of holy chirche; and suche geveres of chirches putten out the children of Crist, and putten into the chirche the develes oughne sone; thay sellen soules that lambes schulde kepe to the wolf that stranglith hem; and therfore schal thay never have part of the pasture of lambes, that is, the blisse of heven.

Now cometh hazardrie with his appertenaunce, as tables and rafles, of whiche cometh deceipt, fals othis, chidynges, and alle raveynes, blasphemyng, and reneying of God and hate of his neighebors, wast of goodes, mispending of tyme, and som tyme manslaughter. Certes, hazardours ne mowe not be withoute gret synne, whil thay haunte that craft. Of avarice cometh eek lesynges, thefte, and fals witnesse and fals othes. And ye schul undirstonde that these ben grete synnes, and expresce agains the comaundementz of God, as I have sayd. Fals witnesse is in word and eek in dede; as for to bireve thin neighebor his good name by thy fals witnessinge, or bireve him his catel or his heritage by thy fals witnesse, whan thou for ire, or for meede,

[1] Pope Damasus was a Spaniard by birth. He distinguished himself as an opponent to the Eunomian and Macedonian heresies, condemned in the Council of Constantinople, and died in the reign of Theodosius the Elder. It was he who first decreed that the custom, observed in various places already, of singing the Psalms antiphonally, and finishing each with the hymn *Gloria Patri*, should be universally adopted throughout the Western Church, as it is to this day.

or for envie, berest fals witnes, or accusist him, or excusist him by thy fals witnes, or ellis excusist thiself falsly. Ware yow, questemongers and notaries. Certis, for fals witnessynge was Susanna[1] in ful gret sorwe and peyne, and many another mo. The synne of thefte is eek expresse agayns Goddes hestis, and that in tuo maners, corporel and spirituel; corporel, as for to take thy neighebours catel agayns his wille, be it by force or by sleight; be it by mette or by mesure; by stelynge eek of fals enditements upon him; and in borwyng of thin neighebores catelle in entent never to pay, and in semblable thinges. Espirituel thefte is sacrilege, that is to sayn, hurtynge of holy thinges, or of thing sacred to Crist. Sacrilege is in tuo maneres; that oon is by reasoun of holy place, as chirches or chirchehawes; for whiche every vileins synne that men doon in suche places may be clepid sacrilege, or every violence in semblable place; that other maner is as tho that withdrawen falsly the rentes and rightes that longen to holy chirche; and generally, sacrilege is to reve holy thing fro holy place, or unholy thing out of holy place, or holy thing out of unholy place.

REMEDIUM CONTRA AVARICIAM.

Now schul ye understonde that the relevynge of avarice is misericorde and pite largely taken. And men might axen, why that misericord and pite is relievyng of avarice; certes, the avaricious man schewith no pite ne misericorde to the needeful man. For he delitith him in the kepyng of his tresor, and nought in the reseowing ne relievyng of his even cristen. And therfore speke I first of misericord. Thanne is misericord, as saith the philosopher, a vertu, by which the corrage of a man is stired by the myseise of him that is myseysed. Upon which misericorde folwith pite, in parformyng of chariteable werkis of mercie, helping

[1] Daniel xiii. in the *Vulgate*.

and comforting him that is misesed. And certes, these moeven men to the misericord of Jhesu Crist, that gaf himself for oure gult, and suffred deth for misericord, and forgaf us oure original synne, and therby relessid us fro peyne of helle, and amenusid the peynes of purgatorie by penitence, and geveth grace wel to do, and at the laste the joye of heven. The spices of misericorde ben for to love, and for to give, and eek for to forgive and for to relesse, and for to have pite in herte, and compassioun of the meschief of his even cristen, and eek chastize ther as neede is. Another maner of remedye agayns avarice, is resonable largesse; but sothely here bihovith the consideracioun of the grace of Jhesu Crist, and of the temporel goodes, and eek of the goodes perdurable that Crist gaf us, and eek to have remembraunce of the deth that he schal resceyve, he noot not whanne; and eke he schal forgon al that he hath, save oonly that he hath dispendid in goode werkes.

But for als moche as some folk ben unresonable, men oughte to eschiewe foly-largesse, the whiche men clepen wast. Certes, he that is fool-large, he giveth nought his catel, but he leseth his catel. Sothely, what thing that he giveth for vaynglorie, as to mynstrals, and to folk for to bere his renoun in the world, he hath synne therof, and noon almes; certes, he lesith foule his goodes, that sekith with the gift of his good no thing but synne. He is like to an hors that sekith rather to drynke drovy watir, and trouble, than for to drinke watir of the welle that is cleer. And for as moche as thay give ther as thay schuld not give, to hem appendith thilke malisoun that Crist schal give at the day of doom to hem that schal be dampned.

DE GULA.

After avarice cometh glotenye, which is expresse eke agayns the comaundement of God. Glotenye is unresonable and desordeyned coveytise to ete and to

drynke. This synne corruptid al this world, as is wel schewed in the synne of Adam and of Eva. Loke eek what saith seint Poul[1] of glotouns; many, saith he, gon, of whiche I have ofte said to yow, and now I say it wepyng, that thay ben thenemyes of the cros of Crist, of whiche thende is deth, and of whiche here wombe is here God and here glorie; in confusion of hem that so saveren erthely thinges. He that is usaunt to this synne of glotonie, he ne may no synne withstonde, he moste be in servage of alle vices, for it is the develes horde, ther he hideth him inne and resteth. This synne hath many spices. The firste is dronkenes, that is thorrible sepulture of mannes resoun; and therefore whan man is dronken, he hath lost his resoun; and this is dedly synne. But schortly, whan that a man is not wont to strong drinke, and peraventure ne knowith not the strengthe of the drynk, or hath feblesse in his heed, or hath travayled, thurgh which he drynkith the more, and be sodeynly caught with drynke, it is no dedly synne, but venial. The secounde spice of glotenie is, whan the spirit of a man wexith al trouble for drunkenesse, and bireveth him his witte and his discressioun. The thridde spice of glotouns is, when a man devoureth his mete, and hath no rightful maner of etyng. The ferthe is, whan thurgh the grete abundaunce of his mete, the humours in his body been distemprid. The fifte is, forgetfulnes by to moche drinking, for which a man somtyme forgetith by the morwe what he dide at eve, or on the night bifore.

In other maner ben distinct the spices of glotonye, after seint Gregory. The firste is, for to ete or drynke byfore tyme to ete. The secound is, whan man giveth him to delicate mete or drinke. The thridde is, whanne man takith to moche therof over mesure. The ferthe is, curiosite, with gret entent to make and

[1] Philip. iii. 18.

apparayle his mete. The fifte is, for to ete to gredely. These ben the fyve fyngres of the develes hand, by whiche he drawith folk to synne.

REMEDIUM CONTRA GULAM.

Agayns glotonye the remedie is abstinence, as saith Galien; but that hold I nought meritorie, if he do it oonly for the hele of his body. Seint Austyn wol that abstinence be don for vertu, and with pacience. Abstinence, he saith, is litil worth, but if a man have good wille therto, and but it be enforced by pacience and by charite, and that men doon it for Goddes sake, and in hope to have the blisse of heven. The felawes of abstinence ben attemperaunce, that holdith the mene in alle thinges; eek schame, that eschiewith al dishoneste; suffisaunce, that seeketh noone riche metes ne drynkes, ne doth no force of to outrageous apparaillyng of mete; mesure also restreyneth by reson the dislave appetit of etyng; sobernes also, that restreyneth the outrage of drinke; sparing also, that restreyneth the delicat ese to sitte longe at mete, wherfore som folk stonden of here owne wille to ete, because they wol ete at lasse leysir.

DE LUXURIA.

After glotonye thanne cometh leccherie, for these two synnes ben so neih cosyns, that ofte tyme thay wol not departe. *Unde Paulus*[1] *ad Ephes., nolite inebriari vino in quo est luxuria, etc.* God wot this synne is ful displesaunt thing to God, for he sayde himself, Do no leccherie. And therfore he putte gret peyne agayn this synne. For in the olde law,[2] if a womman thral were take in this synne, sche scholde be beten with staves to the deth; and if sche were a gentilwomman, sche schulde be slayn with stoons; and if sche were a bisschoppis doughter, sche schulde be

[1] Ephes. v. 18. [2] Levit. xxi. 9.

brent by Goddis comaundement. Fortherover, for the synne of leccherie God dreinte al the world at the diluvie, and after that he brent fyve citees with thonder layt, and sonk hem into helle.

Now let us thanne speke of thilke stynkyng synne of leccherie, that men clepen advoutry, that is of weddid folk, that is to sayn, if that oon of hem be weddid, or elles bothe. Seint Johan[1] saith, that advouterers schuln be in helle in watir brennyng of fuyr and of brimston; in fuyr for the leccherie, in brimston for the stynk of her ordure. Certis the brekyng of this sacrament[2] is an horrible thing; it was makid of God himself in Paradis, and confermed 3f Jhesu Crist, as witnesseth seint Mathew;[3] a man schall lete fader and mooder, and take him to his wif, and thay schul ben two in oon fleisch. This sacrament bitokeneth the knyttyng togider of Crist and of holy chirche.[4] And nat oonly that God forbad advotrie in dede, but eek he comaunded, that thou scholdest not coveyte[5] thy neyhebors wif. In this heste, seith seint Austyn, is forboden al maner coveytise to do leccherie. Lo what seith seint Mathew[6] in the Gospel, that who so seth a womman, to coveytise of his lust, he hath doon lecchery with hir in his herte. Here may ye se, that nought oonly the dede of this synne is forboden, but eek the desir to do that synne. This cursed synne annoyeth grevously hem that it haunten: and first to here soule, for he obligith it to synne and to pyne of the deth that is perdurable; unto the body annoyeth it grevously also, for it dreyeth him and wastith him, and schent him, and of his blood he makith sacrifice to the devel of helle; it wastith eek his catel and his substaunce. And certes, if that it be a foul thing a man to waste his catel on wommen, yit is it a fouler thing, whan that for such ordure wommen dispende upon men here

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[1] Rev. xxi. 8. [2] See vol. ii. p. 164, note 3. [3] Matt. xix. 5.
[4] Ephes. v. 25. [5] Exod. xx. 17. [6] Matt. v. 28.

catel and here substaunce. This synne, as saith the prophete, byreveth man and womman her good fame and al here honour, and it is ful pleasaunt to the devel; for therby wynneth he the moste pray of this world. And right as a marchaunt deliteth him most in chaffare that he hath most avauntage of, right so delitith the feend in this ordure.

This is the other hond of the devel, with fyve fyngres, to cacche the poeple to his vilonye. The firste fynger is the foule lokyng of the foule womman and of the foule man, that sleth right as a basiliskoc sleth folk by the venym of his sight; for the coveytise of eyen folwith the coveytise of the herte. The secounde fynger is the vileynes touchinge in wikkid manere. And therfore saith Salomon,[1] that who so touchith and handelith a womman, he farith lik him that handelith the scorpioun, that styngith and sodeinly sleeth thurgh his envenemynge; or as who so touchith warm picche, it schent his fyngres. The thridde is foule wordes, that farith lik fuyr, that right anoon brenneth the herte. The ferthe is the kissyng; and trewely he were a greet fool that wolde kisse the mouth of a brennyng oven or of a forneys; and more fooles ben thay that kyssen in vilonye, for that mouth is the mouth of helle; and namely thise olde dotard fooles holours, yit wol thay kisse, and flikkere, and besien hemself, though thay may nought do.[2] Certis thay ben like to houndes; for an hound whan he cometh to a roser, or by other bussches, though he may nought pisse, yet wil he heve up his leg and make a countenaunce to pisse. And for that many man weneth he may not synne for no licorousnes that he doth with his wif, certis that opinioun is fals; God wot a man may sle himself with his owne knyf, and make himself dronk of his oughne

[1] Prov. vi. 27; Ecclus. xii. 13; xiii. 1.

[2] The Harl. MS., supported by the Lansd. MS., reads *kisse, though thay may nought do and smater hem.* The reading in the text, which is that of Tyrwhitt, seems to me better.—W.

tonne. Certis, be it wif, or child, or eny worldly thing, that he lovyth biforn God, it is his maumet, and he is an ydolastre. Man schulde love his wyf by discrescioun, paciently and attemperelly, and thanne is sche, as it were, his suster. The fyfte fynger of the develes hond, is the stynkynge dede of leccherie. Certes the fyve fyngres of glotonye the devel put in the wombe of a man; and his fyve fyngres of lecchery bygripeth him by the reynes, for to throwe him into the fourneys of helle, there as they schuln have the fuyr and the wormes that ever schal lasten, and wepyng and wayling, and scharp hunger and thurst, and grislines of develes, that schul al to-tere hem withoute respit and withouten ende. Of leccherie, as I sayde, sourdren divers spices: as fornicacioun, that is bitwen man and womman that ben nought maried, and this is dedly synne, and against nature. Al that is enemy and destruccioun to nature, is agayns nature. Par fay the resoun of a man tellith him wel that it is dedly synne, for als moche as God forbad leccherie. And seint Poule[1] gevith hem that regne that is due to no wight but hem that doon synne dedly. Another synne of lecchery is, for to bireve a mayden of hir maydenhode; for he that so doth, certes he casteth a mayden out of the heighest degre thut is in the present lif, and birevith hir thilke precious fruyt that the book clepith the hundrid fruyt,—I can geve it noon other name in Englisch, but in Latyn it is i-clepid *centesimus fructus* (*secundum Hieronymum contra Jovinianum*). Certes he that so doth, is cause of many harmes and vilenyes, mo than eny man can rekene; right as he som tyme is cause of alle the damages that bestis doon in the feeld, that brekith the hegge of the closure, thurgh which he destroyeth that may not be restored; for certes no more may maydenhode be restored, than an arm, that is smyten fro the body, retourne agayn to

[1] Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

waxe; sche may have mercy, this wot I wel, if sche have wille to do penitence, but never schal it be but that sche nas corrupt. And al be it so that I have spoke somwhat of advoutre, yit is it good to speke of mo perils that longen to advoutre, for to eschiewe that foule synne. Advoutrie, in Latyn, is for to sayn, approaching of other mannes bed, thorugh the which tho that whilom were oon fleisch, abandone here bodyes to other persones. Of this synne, as saith the wise man, many harmes cometh thereof; first, brekyng of faith; and certes faith is the keye of cristendom,[1] and whan that faith is broke and lorn, sothely cristendom is lorn, and stont veyn and withouten fruyt. This synne is eek a theef, for thefte is generally to speke to reve a wight his thing agayns his wille. Certis, this is the foulest thefte that may be, whan a womman stelith hir body from hire housbonde, and giveth it to hire holour to defoule hire, and stelith hir soule fro Crist, and gevith it to the devel. This is a fouler thefte than for to breke a chirche and stele chalises, for these advouterers breke the temple of God spirituelly, and stelen the vessel of grace, that is the body and the soule; for which Jhesu Crist schal destroyen hem, as saith seint Poule.[2] Sothely of this thefte doubtyd gretly Joseph,[3] whan that his lordes wyf prayde him of vilonye, whan he saide, 'Lo, my lady, how my lord hath take to me under my warde al that he hath in this world, ne no thing of his power is oute of my power, but oonly ye that ben his wyf; and how schuld I do thanne this wikkidnes, and synne so horribly agayns God, and my Lord? God it forbede!' Alas! al to litel is such trouthe now i-founde. The thridde harm is the filthe, thurgh which thay breken the comaundement of God, and defoule the auctour of here

[1] That which unlocks the Christian Church to the believer, being the first requisite for receiving baptism and partaking of the privileges of the Christian religion.

[2] 1 Cor. iii. 17.

[3] Gen. xxxix. 8.

matrimonye, that is Crist. For certis, in so moche as the sacrament of mariage is so noble and so digne, so moche is it the gretter synne for to breke it; for God makid mariage in Paradis in thestat of innocence, to multiplie mankynde to the service of God, and therfore is the brekyng therof the more grevous, of which breking cometh fals heires ofte tymes, that wrongfully occupien mennes heritage; and therfore wolde Crist putte hem out of the regne of heven, that is heritage to goode folk. Of this breking cometh eek ofte tyme that folk unwar wedden or synnen with her kynrede; and namely these harlottis, that haunten bordels of these foule wommen, that mowe be likened to a comune gonge, whereas men purgen her entrayles of her ordure. What say we eke of putours, that lyven by the orrible synne of putrie, and constreyne wymmen, ye, som tyme his oughne wyf or his child, as don these baudes, to yelde hem a certeyn rente of here bodily putrie? certes, these ben cursede synnes. Understonde eek that avoutrie is set gladly in the ten comaundements bitwixe manslaughter and thefte, for it is the grettest thefte that may be, for it is thefte of body and soule, and it is lik to homicidie, for it kerveth a-tuo hem that first were makid oon fleisch. And therfore by the olde lawe of God thay scholde be slayn, but natheles, by the lawe of Jhesu Crist, that is the lawe of pite, whan he sayde to the womman that was founde in advoutrie, and schulde have ben slayn with stoones aftir the wille of the Jewes, as was her law, 'Go,' quod Jhesu Crist,[1] 'and wilne no more to do synne;' sothely, the vengeance of avouterye is awardid to the peyne of helle, but if he be destourbed by penitence. Yit ben ther mo spices of this cursed synne, as whan that oon of hem is religious,[2] or ellis bothe, or for folk that ben entred

[1] John viii. 3.

[2] That is, bound by a religious vow of chastity. This is not at all like Wickliffe's doctrine.

into ordre, as sub-dekin, or dekin, or prest, or hospitalers; and ever the higher that he be in ordre, the gretter is the synne. The thinges that gretly aggreggith her synne, is the brekyng of here avow of chastite, whan thay resceyved the ordre; and forther-over is soth, that holy ordre is chefe of alle the tresor of God, and is a special signe and mark of chastite, to schewe that thay ben joyned to chastite, which that is the moste precious lif that is. And eek these ordred folk ben specially tytled to God, and of the special meyne of God; of whiche whan thay don dedly synne, thay ben the special traytours of God and of his poeple, for thay lyven of the poeple to praye for the poeple, and whil thay ben suche traytours here prayer avayleth not to the poeple. Prestis ben aungels, as by the dignite of here misterie; but for soth seint Poul[1] saith, that Sathanas transformeth him in an aungel of light. Sothely, the prest that hauntith dedly synne, he may be likened to the aungel of derknes, transformed into the aungel of light; and he semeth aungel of light, but for sothe he is aungil of darknes. Suche prestes ben the sones of Helle, as schewith in the book of Kinges,[2] that thay were the sones of Belial, that is, the devel. Belial is to say, withoute juge, and so faren thay; thay thynke hem fre, and han no juge, no more than hath a fre bole, that takith which cow that him liketh in the toun. So faren thay by wommen; for right as a fre bole is y-nough for al a toun, right so is a wikked prest corrupcioun y-nough for al a parisch, or for al a contray. These prestes, as saith the book, ne conne not ministere the mistery of presthode to the poeple, ne God ne knowe thay not; thay holde hem nought apayed, as saith the book, of soden fleissch that was to hem offred, but thay tooke by force the fleissch

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 14.

[2] 1 Sam. ii. 12. This book is called in the *Vulgate*, from which Chaucer quotes, the *first book of Kings*.

that is raw. Certes, so these schrewes holde hem not appayed with roasted fleissh and sode fleissh, with whiche the poeple feeden hem in gret reverence, but thay wil have raw fleisch of folkes wyves and here doughtres. And certes, these wommen that consenten to here harlotrie, don gret wrong to Crist and to holy chirche, and to alle halwes, and to alle soules, for thay bireven alle these hem that schulde worschipe Crist and holy chirche and pray for cristen soules. And therfore han suche prestis, and here lemmans eeke that consenten to here leccherie, the malisoun of al the court cristian, til thay come to amendement. The thridde spice of advoutry is som tyme bitwixe a man and his wif, and that is, whan thay take noon regard[1] in her assembling but oonly to the fleischly delit, as saith seint Jerom, and ne rekke of no thing but that thay be assemblid bycause that thay ben maried; al is good y-nough as thinkith hem. But in suche folk hath the devel power, as saith the aungel Raphael to Thoby,[2] for in here assemblyng, thay putten Jhesu Crist out of her herte, and given hemself to alle ordure. The ferthe spice is the assemble of hem that ben of here kynrede, or of hem that ben of oon affinite, or elles with hem with whiche here fadres or here kynrede han deled in the synne of leccherie; this synne makith hem like houndes, that taken noon heede of kynrede. And certes, parenteal is in tuo maneres, eyther gostly or fleisshly. Gostly, as for to dele with her gossib; for right so as he that engendrith a child, is his fleisshly fader, right so is his godfather his fader espirituel; for which a womman may in no lasse synne assemble with hir gossib, than with hire oughne fleischly fader or brother. The fifte spice is thilke abhominable synne, of which that no man unnethe oughte to speke ne write, natheles it is

[1] The Harl. MS. reads *reward*, which does not make sense.
[2] Tobit vi. 17.

openly rehersed in holy wryt. But though that holy writ speke of horrible synne, certes holy writ may not be defouled, no more than the sonne that schyneth on a dongehul. Another synne apperteneth to lecchery, that cometh in sleping, and this synne cometh ofte to hem that ben maydenes, and eek to hem that ben corrupte; and this synne men clepen pollucioun, that cometh in foure maners; som tyme it cometh of languisschynge of the body, for the humours ben to ranke and to abundaunt in the body of man; som tyme of infirmite, for feblenesse of the vertu retentyf, as phisik makith mencioun; and som tyme for surfete of mete and drynke; som tyme of vileins thoughtes that ben enclosed in mannes mynde whan he gothe to slepe, which may not be withouten synne; for which man must kepe him wisely, or elles may men synne grevously.

REMEDIUM CONTRA LUXURIAM.

Now cometh the remedye agens lecchery, and that is generally chastite of wikkedhede and continence that restreyneth alle the disordeigne moevynges that comen of fleischly talentes; and ever the gretter meryt schal he han that most restreyneth eschaufynges of ordure of this synne; and this is in tuo maneres; that is to sayn, chastite of mariage, and chastite of widewhede. Now schalt thou understonde, that matrimoigne is leful assemblynge of man and womman, that resceyven by virtu of this sacrement the bond thurgh which thay may not be departid in al here lif, that is to say, while thay lyven bothe. This, as saith the boke,[1] is a ful gret sacrement: God makid it (as I have said) in Paradis, and wolde himself be born in mariage; and for to halwen mariage he was at the weddyng[2] wheras he turnede watir into wyn, which was the firste miracle that he wrought in erthe biforn

[1] Ephes. v. 32. [2] John ii.

his disciples. The trewe effect of mariage clensith fornicacioun, and replenischith holy chirche of good lynage, for that is the ende of mariage, and it chaungith dedly synne into venyal synne[1] bituixe hem that ben weddid, and maketh the hertes al one, as wel as the bodyes. This is verray mariage that was first blessed by God, er that the synne bigan, whan naturel lawe was in his right poynt in Paradis; and it was ordeyned, that oon man schulde have but oon womman, and oon womman but oon man, as saith seint Augustyn, by many resouns. First, for mariage is figured bitwixe Crist and holy chirche;[2] another is, for a man is heed of a womman[3] (algate by ordinaunce it schulde be so); for if a womman had mo men than oon, than schulde sche have mo hedes than oon, and that were an horrible thing biforn God; and eek a womman myghte nought please many folk al at oones; and also ther ne schulde never be pees and rest among hem, for everich wolde aske his oughne thing. And fortherover, no man schulde knowe his oughne engendrure, ne who schulde have his heritage, and the womman scholde be the lasse loved fro the tyme that sche were joyned to many men.

Now cometh how that a man schulde bere him with his wif, and namely in tuo thinges, that is to sayn, in sufferaunce and in reverence, and that schewed Crist when he made first womman. For he ne made hire not of the heed of Adam, for sche schulde not to gret lordschipe have; for ther as the womman hath the maistry, sche makith to moche disaray; ther needith noon ensample of this, the experience that we have day by day oughte suffice. Also certes, God ne made nought womman of the foot of Adam, for sche ne scholde nought be holden to lowe, for sche can not paciently suffre. But God made womman of the ribbe of Adam, for womman

[1] See vol. i. p. 207, note 2. [2] Ephes. v. 25. [3] 1 Cor. xi. 3.

schulde be felawe unto man. Man schulde bere him to his wif in faith, in trouthe, and in love; as saith seint Poule,[1] that a man schulde love his wif, as Crist loved holy chirche, that loved it so wel that he deyed for it; so schulde a man for his wyf, if it were neede.

Now how that a womman schulde be subject to hir housbonde, that tellith seint Peter, iij° c°; first in obedience. And eek, as saith the decre, a womman that is a wif, as longe as sche is a wif, sche hath noon auctorite to swere ne to bere witnesse, without leve of hir housbonde, that is hir lord; algate he schulde be so by resoun. Sche schulde eek serve him in al honeste, and ben attempre of hir array. I wot wel that thay schulde sette here entent to please her housbondes, but nought by here queyntise of array. Seint Jerom saith, that wyves that ben arrayed in silk and in purpre, ne mowe nought clothe hem in Jhesu Crist. Loke what saith saint Johan eek in the same matier. Seint Gregori saith eek, that no wight sekith precious clothing ne array, but oonly for veyn-glorie to ben honoured the more biforn the poeple. It is a gret folly, a womman to have fair array out-ward, and hirsilf to ben foul in-ward. A wyf schulde eek be mesurable in lokyng, and in beryng, and in laugheing, and discrete in alle hir wordes and hir dedes, and above alle worldly thinges sche schulde love hir housebonde with al hire herte, and to him to be trewe of hir body; so scholde an housebonde eeke ben trewe to his wif; for sith that al the body is the housebondes, so schulde here herte ben, or elles ther is bitwixe hem tuo, as in that, no parfyt mariage. Thanne schal men understonde, that for thre thinges a man and his wyf mowe fleischly assemble. The firste is, in entent of engendrure of children, to the service of God, for certis that is the cause fynal of

[1] Ephes. v. 25. [2] He appears to allude to 1 Peter iii. 1.

matrimoyne. The secounde cause is, to yelden everych of hem his dette unto other of his body; for neyther of hem hath power of his oughne body.[1] The thridde is, for to eschiewe leccherie and vilenye. The ferthe for sothe is dedly synne. As to the firste, it is meritory; the secounde also, for, as saith the decre, that sche hath merite of chastite, that yeldith to hir housebonde the dette of hir body, ye though it be agayn hir likyng and the lust of hir hert. The thridde maner is venial synne; and trewly, scarsly may eny of these be withoute venial synne, for the corrupcioun and for the delit. The ferthe maner is for to understonde, as if thay assemble oonly for amorous love, and for noon of the forsayde causes, but for to accomplise thilke brennynge delyt, thay rekke never how ofte, sothely it is dedly synne; and yit, with sorwe, some folk wole more peyn hem for to doon, than to her appetit suffiseth.

The secounde maner of chastite is to ben a clene widewe, and to eschiewe the embrasynges of men, and desiren the embrasynges of Jhesu Crist. These ben tho that han ben wyves, and han forgon here housebondes, and eek wommen that han doon leccherie, and be relieved by penitence. And certis, if that a wyf couthe kepe hir al chast, by licence of hir housebonde, so that sche geve non occasioun that he agilt, it were to hir a gret merit. Thise maner wymmen, that observen chastite, moste be clene in herte as wel as in body, and in thought, and mesurable in clothing and in countenaunce, abstinent in etyng and drynkyng, in speche and in dede, and thanne is sche the vessel or the boyst of the blessed Magdaleyne, that fulfillith holy chirche ful of good odour. The thridde maner of chastite is virginite, and it bihoveth that sche be holy in herte, and clene of body, and thanne is sche spouse of Jhesu Crist, and sche is the lif of aungels;

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 3, 4.

sche is the preysyng of this world, and she is as these martires in egalite; sche hath in hir that tongue may nought telle. Virginite bar oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and virgine was himselve.

Another remedy agayns leccherie is specially to withdrawe such thinges as given occasioun to thilke vilonye; as is ease, and etyng, and drynkyng; for certes, whan the pot boylith strongely, the beste remedye is to withdrawe the fuyr. Sleping eek longe in greet quiete is also a greet norice unto leccherie.

Another remedye agayns leccherie is, that a man or a womman eschiewe the companye of hem by whiche he doutith to be tempted; for al be it so that the dede be withstonde, yit is ther gret temptacioun. Sothely a whit wal, although it brenne not fully by stikyng of a candel, yet is the wal blak of the leyte. Ful ofte tyme I rede, that no man truste in his oughne perfeccioun, but he be strenger than Sampson, or holiere than Davyd, or wiser than Salomon.

Now after that I have declared yow the seven dedly synnes as I can, and some of here braunches, and here remedyes, sothely, if I couthe, I wolde telle yow the ten comaundements,[1] but so heigh a doctrine I leve to divines. But natheles, I hope to God thay ben touchid in this litel tretys everich of hem alle.

Now for as moche as the secounde part of penitence stant in confessioun of mouth, as I bigan in the firste chapitre, I say, seint Austyn saith, synne is every word and every dede, and al that men coveyten agayn the lawe of Jhesu Crist; and this is for to synne, in herte, in mouthe, and in dede, by thy fyve wittis, that ben sight, heeryng, smellyng, tastyng, or savoryng, or felyng. Now it is good to understonden the circumstaunces that aggreggen moche to every synne. Thou

[1] The application to Christian morals of the commandments of the Decalogue, which were originally intended only for the Jews, is by no means a simple matter to those who are best acquainted with theology.

schalt considre what thou art that dost the synne, whethir that thou be mal or femal, old other yong, gentil or thral, fre or servaunt, hool or seek, weddid or sengle, ordrid or unordred, wys or fool, clerk or seculer; if sche be of thy kyn, bodily or gostly, or noon; if eny of thy kynrede have synned with hire or noon, and many mo thinges.

That other circumstaunce is, whether it be don in fornicacioun or in advoutry, or incest or noon, or mayden or noon, in maner of homicide or noon, horrible grete synne or smale, and how long thou hast continued in synne. The thridde circumstaunce is the place wher thou hast don synne, whether in other mennes houses, or in thin owne, in feld, or in chirche, or in chirchehawe, in chirche dedicate, or noon. For if the chirche were halowed, and man or womman spillid his kynde within that place, by way of synne or by wykked temptacioun, it is enterdited til it be reconsiled by the bischop; and the prest scholde be enterdyted that dede such a vilonye to terme of al his lyf, and scholde no more synge no masse; and if he dede, he schulde do dedly synne, at every tyme that he song masse. The ferthe circumstaunce is, by which mediatours, as by messagers, or for entysement, or for consentement, to bere companye with felawship; for many a wrecche, for to bere companye, wol go to the devel of helle. For thay that eggyn or consentyn to the synne, ben parteneres of the synne, and of the dampnacioun of the synnere. The fyfte circumstaunce is, how many tymes that he hath synned, if it be in his mynde, and how ofte he hath falle. For he that ofte fallith in synne, despiseth the mercy of God, and encresceth his synne, and is unkynde to Crist, and he waxith the more feble to withstonde synne, and synneth the more lightly, and the latter arrisith, and is the more eschiewe[1] to schrive

[1] Perhaps *eschiewe* may be here an adjective, meaning disinclined. Tyrwhitt reads *slow*, the meaning of which is more obvious.

him, and namely to him that hath ben his confessour. For whiche that folk, whan thay falle agayn to here olde folies, eyther thay forletin her confessours al utterly, or ellis thay departen here schrifte in divers places; but sothely such departed schrifte hath no mercy of God of his synnes. The sixte circumstaunce is, why that a man synneth, as by which temptacioun; and if himself procure thilke temptacioun, or by excityng of other folk; or if he synne with a womman by force or by hir owne assent; or if the womman maugre hir heed hath ben enforced or noon, this schal sche telle, and whether it were for coveytise or for poverte, and if it was hire procuryng or noon, and alle such maner harneys. The seventhe circumstaunce is, in what maner he hath don his synne, or how that sche hath suffred that folk han doon to hire. The same schal the man telle pleynly, with alle the circumstaunces, and whether he have synned with commune bordeal womman or noon, or doon his synne in holy tyme or noon, in fastyng tyme or noon, or biforn his schrifte, or after his latter schrifte, and hath peradventure broken therby his penaunce enjoyned therfor, by whos help or by whos counseil, by sorcery or by other crafte, al moste be told. Alle these thinges, after thay be grete or smale, engreggen the consciens of a man. And eek the prest that is the jugge, may the better ben avysed of his jugement in givyng of thy penaunce, and that is after thy contricioun. For understonde wel, that after the tyme that a man hath defouled his baptisme by synne, if he wol come to savacioun, ther is noon other wey but penitence,[1] and schrifte of mouthe, and by satisfaccioun; and namely by the tuo, if ther be a confessour to which he may schyrve him, and the thridde if ye have lif to parforme it.

[1] The way of penitence is compared by the Fathers to a plank, on which the shipwrecked mariner may save himself from drowning, though cast out of the ship.

Thanne schal men loke it and considre, that if he wol make a trewe and a profitable confessioun, ther moste be foure condicioun̄s. First, it moste ben in sorweful bitternesse of herte, as sayde the king Ezechiel[1] to God, I wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lif in bitternes of myn hert. This condicioun of bitternes have fyve signes; the first is, that confessioun moste be schamefast, not for to covere ne hyde his synne, but for he hath agultid his God and defoulid his soule. And herof saith seint Augustyn, the herte tremblith for schame of his synne, and for he hath gret schamefastnes he is digne to have gret mercy of God. Such was the confessioun of the publican,[2] that wolde nought heve up his eyghen to heven, for he had offendid God of heven; for which schamefastnes he had anon the mercy of God. And therfore seith seint Augustyn, that such schamefast folk ben next forgevenes of remissioun. The secounde signe is humilite of confessioun; of which saith seint Petre,[3] humblith yow under the might of God; the hond of God is myghty in confessioun, for therby God forgiveth the thy synnes, for he alone hath the power. And this humilite schal ben in herte, and in signe outward; for right as he hath humilite to God in his herte, right so schulde he humble his body out-ward to the prest, that sittith in Goddes place. For which in no manere, sith that Crist is soverayn, and the prest is his mene and mediatour betwix Crist and the synnere, and the synner is the lasse as by way of resoun, thanne schulde nought the confessour sitte as lowe as the synnere, but the synnere schulde knele biforn him or at his feet, but if maladye distourbid it; for he schal take no keep who sittith there, but in whos place that he sitteth. A man that hath trespassed to a lord, and cometh for to axe him of mercy and to maken his

[1] The true reading is Ezechias, or Hezekiah. The quotation is from Isaiah xxxviii. 15.

[2] Luke xviii. 10. [3] 1 Peter v. 6.

accord, and settith him doun anoon by the lord, men wolde holde him outrageous, and not worthy so soone for to have mercy ne remissioun. The thridde signe is, that thy schrifte schulde be ful of teeris, if men may wepe; and if he may not wepe with his bodily eyen, let him wepe with his herte. Such was the confessioun of seint Peter;[1] for after that he hadde forsake Jhesu Crist, he wente out and wept ful bitterly. The ferthe signe is, that he lette nought for schame to schryve him and to schewen his confessioun. Such was the confessioun of Magdaleyn,[2] that spared for no schame of hem that were at the feste to go to oure Lord Jhesu Crist and byknowe to him hire synne. The fifte signe is, that a man or a womman be obeisaunt to resceyve the penaunce that him is enjoyned. For certis Jhesu Crist for the gultes of oon man was obedient to his deth.

The other condicioun of verray confessioun is, that it hastily be doon; for certes, if a man had a dedly wounde, ever the lenger that he taried to warisch himself, the more wolde it corrupte and haste him to his deth, and eek the wounde wolde be the worse to hele. And right so fareth synne, that long time is in a man unschewed. Certes a man oughte soone schewe his synne for many causes; as for drede of deth, that cometh sodeinly, and not certeyn what tyme it schal come, or ben in what place; and eek the drecchyng of oon synne draweth another; and eek the lenger he tarieth, the ferther is he from Crist. And if he abyde unto his laste day, skarsly may he schrive him or remembre him of his synnes, or repente for the grevous malady of his deth. And for as moche as he hath not in his lif herkened Jhesu Crist, whan he hath spoken, he schal crien to Jhesu Crist at his laste day, and scarsly wol he herken him. And understonde that this condicioun moste have foure thinges. First that thy schrifte moste ben purveyed byforn, and avysed,

[1] Matt. xxvi. 75. [2] Luke vii. 37.

for wikked haste doth no profyt; and that a man can schryve him of his synnes, be it of pride or of envye, and so forth alle the spices and the circumstaunces; and that he have comprehendid in his mynde the nombre and the gretnes of his synne, and how longe he hath lyen in synne; and eek that he be contrit of his sinnes, and in stedefast purpos (by the grace of God) never eft to falle in synne; and eek that he drede and countrewayte himself, and that he flee the occasiouns of synne, to whiche he is enclyned. Also that thou schalt schrive the of alle thin synnes to oon man, and nat a parcel to oon man, and a parcel to another man; that is, understonde, in entent to parte thy confessioun as for schame or drede, for it nys but strangelyng of thy soule. For certes, Jhesu Crist is enterely al good, in him is noon imperfeccioun, and therfore outher he forgiveth al parfitely, or elles never a del. I say nought, if thou be assigned to thy penitencere for certein synne, that thou art bounde to schewe him al the remenaunt of thy synnes, of whiche thou hast ben schryven of thy curate,[1] but if it like the of thin humilite; this is no departyng of schrifte. Ne I ne say not, ther as I speke of divisoun of confessioun, that if thou have licence to schryve the to a discret and to an honest prest, wher the likith,[2] and eek by the licence of thy curate, that thou ne maist wel schrive the to him of alle thyn synnes; but let no synne be byhinde untold as fer as thou hast remembraunce. And whan thou schalt be schrive of thi curate, telle him eeke al thy synne that thou hast doon sith thou were last i-schryvne. This is no wikkid entent of divisioun of schrifte.

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[1] See vol. ii. p. 117, note 4.

[2] No man was bound to take his own parish priest as his spiritual director, but might choose any one in whom he had confidence. The compilers of the office for the Holy Communion in the Book of Common Prayer, &c., appear to have intended to maintain this liberty.—See the first Exhortation in Communion Service.

Also thy verrey schrifte askith certeyn condiciouns. First, that thou schrive the by thy fre wille, nought constreyned, ne for schame of folk, ne for maladye, or such thing; for it is resoun, that he that trespassith with his fre wille, that by his fre wille he confesse his trespas; and that noon other man schal telle his synne but himself; ne he schal not nayte or denye his synne, ne wraththe him with the prest for his amonestynge to lete synne. The secounde condicioun is, that thy schrifte be laweful, that is to sayn, that thou that schrivest the, and eek the prest that herith thy confessioun, ben verrayly in the feith of holy chirche, and that a man be nought despaired of the mercy of Jhesu Crist, as Caym or Judas. And eek a man moot accuse himself of his owne trespas and not another; but he schal blame and wite himself of his oughne malice of his synne, and noon other. But natheless, if that another man be occasioun or ellis enticer of his synne, or that the estate of a persone be such thurgh which his synne aggreggith, or elles that he may not playnly schryve hym but he telle the person with which he hath synned, thanne may he telle it, so that his entent be nought to bakbyte the persone, but oonly to declare his confessioun.

Thow schalt nought eke make no lesyng in thy confessioun for humilite, peraventure to sayn that thou hast don synnes of whiche thou were never gulty; as seint Augustyn saith, if thou bycause of humilite makest lesynges on thiself, though thou were not in synne biforn, yit art thou thanne in synne thurgh thy lesynges. Thou most also schewe thy synne by thyn oughne proper mouth, but thou woxe dombe, and not by no lettre; for thou that hast don the synne, thou schalt have the schame of the confessioun. Thou schalt noughte peynte thy confessioun, by faire subtil wordes, to cover the more thy synne; for thanne bigilist thou thiself, and not the prest; thou most telle it platly, be it never so foul ne so horrible. Thou

schalt eek schrive the to a prest that is discrete to counsaile the; and thou schalt nought schryve the for veineglorie, ne for ypocrisie, ne for no cause but oonly for the doute of Jhesu Crist and the hele of thy soul. Thou schalt not eek renne to the prest sodeinly, to telle him lightly thy synne, as who tellith a tale or a jape, but avysily and with gret devocioun; and generally schrive the ofte; if thou ofte falle, ofte thou arise by confessioun. And though thou schryve the ofter than oones of synne of which thou hast ben schriven, it is the more merite; and, as saith seint Augustyn, thou schalt have the more lightly relessyng and grace of God, bothe of synne and of payne. And certes oones a yer atte lest way it is laweful to be houselyd,[1] for sothely oones a yer alle thinges in the erthe renovelen.

DE TERTIA PARTE PENITENTIÆ.

Now have I told of verray confessioun, that is the secounde partye of penitence. The thridde partye of penitence is satisfaccioun, and that stondith generally in almesdede and bodily peyne. Now ben ther thre maner of almesdede; contricioun of herte, wher a man offereth himself to God; the secounde is, to have pite of the defaute of his neighebor; the thridde is, in geving of good counseil and comfort, gostly and bodily, where men han neede, and namely in sustenaunce of mennes foode. And take keep that a man hath neede of these thinges generally, he hath neede of foode, of clothing, and of herberwe, he hath neede of charitable counseil and visityng in prison and malady, and sepulture of his dede body. And if thou may not visite the needeful with thy persone, visite by thy message and by thy giftes. These ben general almesses or

[1] To communicate once a year at Easter was one of the precepts of the mediæval Church. In the Book of Common Prayer every one is required to communicate three times at least. See Rubric at the end of Communion Service.

werkes of charite, of hem that han temporal riches or discrecioun in counselynge. Of these werkes schalt thou hieren at the day of doom.

This almes schalt thou doon of thin oughne propur thinges, and hastily, and prively if thou maist; but natheles, if thou maist not do it prively, thou schalt nought forbere to do almes, though men se it, so that it be nought don for thank of the world, but oonly for thonk of Jhesu Crist. For, as witnessith seint Mathewe, c° v^to^, a cite may not ben hid that is set on a mountayn, ne men light not a lanterne and put it under a buisschel, but men sette it on a candel-stikke, to lighte the men in the hous; right so schal youre light lighten biforn men, that they may se youre goode werkes, and glorifien youre Fader that is in heven.

Now as to speke of bodily peyne, it is in prayere, in wakinges, in fastynges, in vertuous techinges. Of orisouns ye schul understonde, that orisouns or prayeres, is for to seyn, a pitous wil of herte, that redressith it in God, and expressith it by word out-ward, to remeve harmes, and to have thinges espirituel and durable, and som tyme temporel thinges. Of whiche orisouns, certes in the orisoun of the Pater-noster hath oure Lord Jhesu Crist enclosed most thinges. Certis it is privileged of thre thinges in his dignite, for whiche it is more digne than any other prayer; for Jhesu Crist himself maked it;[1] and it is schort, for it schulde be coud[2] the more lightly, and for to withholde it the more esily in herte, and helpe himselfe the oftere with this orisoun, and for a man schulde be the lasse wery to say it, and for a man may not excuse him to lerne it, it is so schort and so easy; and for it comprehendith in itself alle goode prayeres. The exposicioun of this holy praier, that is so excellent and so digne, I

[1] Matt. vi. 9.

[2] That is, That it might be learned by heart the more easily.

bitake to these maystres of theology, save thus moche wol I sayn, whan thou prayest that God schulde forgive the thy gultes as thou forgivest hem that they gulten to the, be ful wel ware that thou be not out of charite. This holy orisoun amenisith eek venial synne,[1] and therfore it appendith specially to penitence.

This praier moste be trewely sayd, and in verray faith, and that men pray to God ordinatly, discretly, and devoutly; and alway a man schulde putte his wille to be subject to the wille of God. This orisoun moste eek be sayd with greet humblesse and ful pure, and honestly, and nought to the annoyaunce of eny man or womman. It most eek be continued with the werkis of charite. It avaylith agayns the vices of the soule; for, as seith seint Jerom, by fastyng ben saved the vices of fleissch, and by prayere the vices of the soule.

After this thou schalt understonde, that bodily peyne stant in wakyng. For Jhesu Crist saith,[2] wakith and prayeth, that ye ne entre not into temptacioun. Ye schul understonde also, that fastynge stont in thre thinges, in forbering of bodily mete and drink, and in forberyng of worldly jolite, and in forbering of worldly synne; this is to sayn, that a man schal kepe him fro dedly synne in al that he may.

And thou schalt understonde eek, that God ordeyned fastyng, and to fastyng appurteynen foure thinges: largesce to pover folk, gladnes of hert espirituel: not to ben angry ne annoyed ne grucche for he fastith; and also resonable hour for to ete by mesure, that is to sayn, a man schulde not ete in untyme, ne sitte the lenger at his mele, for he fastith.

Thanne schal thou understonde, that bodily peyne stant in discipline, or teching, by word, or by writyng, or by ensample. Also in weryng of heires or of stamyn or of haberjeons on her naked fleisch for Cristes

[1] That is, Saying this prayer, with the proper disposition, is a means of obtaining pardon for venial sin, and diminishing its bad effects upon the mind. [2] Matt. xxvi. 41.

sake, and suche maner penaunce; but ware the wel that such maner penaunce of thyn fleissch make nought thin herte bitter or angry, or anoyed of thiself; for better is to cast away thin hayre than for to caste away the swetnes of oure Lord Jhesu Crist. And therfore seith seint Poule,[1] clothe yow, as thay that ben chosen of God in herte, of misericorde, debonairete, sufferaunce, and such maner of clothing, of the which Jhesu Crist is more appayed than of haires or of hauberkis.

Than is discipline eek in knokking on the brest, in scourgyng with yerdes,[2] in knelynges, in tribulaciouns, in suffring paciently wronges that ben doon to him and eek in pacient sufferaunce of maledies, or lesyng of worldly catel, or of wif, or of child, or of othir frendes.

Thanne schalt thou understonde whiche thinges destourben penaunce, and this is in foure thinges; that is drede, schame, hope, and wanhope, that is, desperacioun. And for to speke first of drede, for which he weneth that he may suffre no penaunce, ther agayns is remedye for to thinke that bodily penaunce is but schort and litel at the regard of the peyne of helle, that is so cruel and so long, that it lastith withouten ende.

Now agains the schame that a man hath to schryve him, and namely these ypocrites, that wolde be holde so parfyt that thay have no neede to schryve hem; agayns that schame schulde a man thinke, that by way of resoun he that hath not ben aschamed to do foule thinges, certis him oughte not be aschamed to doon faire thinges and goode thinges, and that is confessioun.

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[1] Col. iii. 12.

[2] This injudicious mode of discipline was carried to a great excess by Peter Damian and other men of eminent abilities and sanctity in the middle ages, and arose from the idea of being 'conformed to the sufferings of Christ;' but these men forgot that His sufferings were, if not involuntary, at least not self-inflicted. The practice is highly disapproved of by the learned Abbé Fleury in his *Ecclesiastical History*.

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A man scholde eek thinke, that God seeth and knoweth alle thy thoughtes, and thy werkes; to him may no thing be hyd ne covered. Men schulde eek remembre hem of the schame that is to come at the day of doom, to hem that ben nought penitent and schriven in this present lif; for alle the creatures in heven and in erthe, and in helle, schuln seen apertly al that he hydith in this world.

Now for to speke of hem that ben so negligent and slowe to schryve hem; that stant in tuo maneres. That oon is, that he hopith for to lyve longe, and for to purchace moche riches for his delyt, and thanne he wol schrive him; and, as he saith, he may, as him semith, tymely y-nough come to schrifte; another is, the surquidrie that he hath in Cristes mercy. Agains the firste vice, he schal thinke that oure lif is in no sikernesse, and eek that al the riches in this world ben in adventure, and passen as a schadowe on the wal; and, as saith seint Gregory, that it apperteyneth to the grete rightwisnes of God, that never schal the peyne stynte of hem, that never wolde withdrawe hem fro synne her thankes, but ay continue in synne; for thilke perpetuel wille to doon synne schul thay have perpetuel peyne.

Wanhope is in tuo maneres. The firste wanhope is, in the mercy of Crist; that other is, that thay thinke thay mighte nought longe persever in goodnesse. The firste wanhope cometh of that he demyth that he synned so highly and so ofte, and so longe layn in synne, that he schal not be saved. Certis agens that cursed wanhope schulde he thenke, that the passioun of Jhesu Crist is more strong for to unbynde, than synne is strong for to bynde. Agains the secounde wanhope he schal thinke, that als ofte as he fallith, he may arise agayn by penitence; and though he never so longe have leyn in synne, the mercy of Crist is alway redy to resceyve him to mercy. Agains the wanhope that he thinkith he schulde not longe

persevere in goodnesse, he schal thinke that the febles of the devel may no thing doon, but men wol suffre him; and eek he schal have strengthe of the help of God, and of al holy chirche, and of the proteccioun of aungels, if him list.

Thanne schal men understonde, what is the fruyt of penaunce; and after the word of Jhesu Crist, it is the endeles blisse of heven, ther joye hath no contrariete of wo ne of penaunce ne grevance; ther alle harmes ben passed of this present lif; ther as is the sikernesse fro the peyne of helle; ther as is the blisful compagnye that rejoycen hem evermo everich of otheres joye; ther as the body of man, that whilom was foule and derke, is more clere than the sonne; ther as the body of man that whilom was seek and frel, feble and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so hool, that ther may no thing empeire it; ther nys neyther honger, ne thurst, ne colde, but every soule replenisched with the sight of the parfyt knowyng of God.[1] This blisful regne may men purchace by poverte espirituel,[2] and the glorie by lowenes,[3] the plente of joye by hunger and thurst,[4] and reste by travaile, and the lif by deth and mortificacioun of synne;[5] to which life he us bringe, that bought us with his precious blood. Amen.

PRECES DE CHAUCERES.[6]

Now pray I to yow alle that heren this litel tretis or reden it, that if ther be any thing in it that likes

[1] See note 8, p. 187. [2] Matt. v. 3. [3] *Ibid.* 4.
[4] *Ibid.* 5. [5] Rom. vi. 5.

[6] This Prayer, or Retractation, has been the subject of much discussion. Some of Chaucer's commentators have not hesitated to pronounce it a fabrication. Hearne declares his belief that the 'revocation,' by which he means the whole passage, 'is not genuine, but that it was made by the monks;' and Tyrwhitt, who cannot go quite as far, thinks that a certain portion of it is an interpolation. The genuineness of the passage, however, (whatever speculations may be raised upon the manner of its introduction,) is placed beyond doubt by the fact that it is found, with some variations in the title, in all complete MSS. and editions. In one MS. it is prefaced by these words, *Here taketh the maker his leve;* and is concluded by *Here endeth the*

hem, that therof thay thanke oure Lord Jhesu Crist, of whom procedith alle witte and al goodnes; and if ther be eny thing that displesith hem, I pray hem that

Personnys Tale. In another is a Latin introduction, *Hic capit auctor licentiam;* and at the termination, *Explicit narratio Rectoris, et ultima inter narrationes hujus libri de quibus composuit Chaucer, cujus anime propicietur Deus. Amen.* In Caxton's second edition it is headed simply 'The Prayer;' and in some MSS. it follows the Tale, without any heading or introduction. These variations only serve to show that the copyists took the liberty of prefixing titles, or omitting them, as they thought fit, to a form of concluding a book which was common in their time, and with which they were well acquainted; but as the whole passage appears in all the copies, either with or without a title or prefix, no reasonable ground exists for doubting the authenticity of the authorship.

The difficulty that has been felt in admitting the genuineness of the passage arises from the internal confusion it betrays between the poet in his own person, and the Rector he personates. Tyrwhitt proposes to solve this difficulty by the following hypothesis. He supposes that the beginning of the passage (except the words 'or reden it') and the end make together the proper and legitimate conclusion of *The Persones Tale;* and that the middle part, from 'and namely' to 'alle the scintes in heven,' is an interpolation. He adds, 'It must be allowed, I think that the appellation 'litel treatise' suits better with *The Persones Tale* taken singly, than with the whole work. The doubt expressed, 'If ther be eny thing that displesith,' &c. is very agreeable to the manner in which the *Personne* speaks in his Prologue. The mention of 'verray repentaunce, penitence, confessioun and satisfaccioun' seems to refer pointedly to the subject of the speaker's preceding discourse; and the title given to Christ, 'Prest of alle Prestis,' seems peculiarly proper in the mouth of a priest.'

With respect to the middle, which he supposes to be an interpolation, he says, 'I think it not improbable that Chaucer might be persuaded by the religious who attended him in his last illness, to revoke or retract certain of his works; or at least that they might give out that he had made such retractions as they thought proper. In either case it is possible that the same zeal might think it expedient to join the substance of these retractions to *The Canterbury Tales*, the antidote to the poison; and might accordingly procure the present interpolation to be made in the Epilogue to *The Persones Tale*, taking care, at the same time, by the insertion of the words '*or reden it*,' to convert that Epilogue from an address of the Persone to his *hearers* into an address of Chaucer to his *readers*.'

Tyrwhitt's learning and good sense always entitle his opinions to respect; but the elaborate details and ingenuity of this hypothesis are fatal to its reception. It may be fairly assumed that there are a thousand chances to one against the probability of a supposed event which requires the concurrence of so many minute circumstances in its support. The assumption that Chaucer might have been persuaded in his last illness by the religious who attended him to make a retractation of certain of his works, clearly rests on the supposition that

thay arette it to the defaute of myn unconnyng, and not to my wille, that wolde fayn have sayd better if I hadde connyng; for the book saith, al that is writen for oure doctrine is writen.[1] Wherfore I biseke yow mekely for the mercy of God that ye pray for me, that

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Chaucer did not make the retractation voluntarily, or of his own accord; because, if he desired to revoke his writings, or to express his regret for them, there would have been no necessity for his spiritual adviser to persuade him to do so. Now we have in this very recantation itself, the most conclusive evidence that Chaucer did desire to recal certain portions of his writings, and that he had already actually done so in the most formal and deliberate shape; for he distinctly alludes to several of his poems which he had previously revoked in what he calls his *Retraccioun*s, a book, or treatise, which he appears to have written for the express purpose, but which is now lost. This retractation, therefore, with which he concludes *The Persones Tale*, is, in fact, neither more nor less than a summary or repetition at the end of his great labour, of that sentiment of regret which he had already more fully and carefully expressed. Nor are we at liberty to question the authenticity of this retractation, on the grounds that Chaucer might have exhibited his repentance still more effectually by suppressing his objectionable poems, since it is certain that, although *The Canterbury Tales* were not yet concluded, many of the detached parts and introductory dialogues had passed into extensive circulation, and could not be recalled. Besides, even if the MSS. could be recovered, and committed to the fire, the wish to remove the impression they had made would still animate the poet under the influence of the feelings so strongly and touchingly displayed in this remarkable passage.

Upon the whole of the evidence—the authority of the MSS., and the tenderness and pathos of the composition, in itself highly characteristic of Chaucer's manner—the authenticity of the retractation may be regarded as being fairly established; and the following considerations will clear up the only remaining apparent inconsistency.

It was usual for theologians, from St. Augustin down, to wind up a treatise by submitting their opinions to the judgment of the Church, and retracting any which might be found repugnant to its doctrines. The probability is obvious enough that some such formulary was appended to the tract from which Chaucer derived *The Persones Tale;* and it would be quite in accordance with his general spirit, and his practice on more than one occasion, partly to reassume his own character, and to take leave of his readers by the mouth of the Persone, thus availing himself of the custom of theologians to close his last great literary work with a graceful and pathetic peroration. This hypothesis explains the confusion between the author and the character he assumes. The passage, as Tyrwhitt remarks, contains some expressions peculiarly applicable to the reciter of the tale. These we are enabled, by this hypothesis, to refer to the original from which Chaucer translates; while those that refer to the writings revoked by the poet constitute Chaucer's adaptation of the original to his own case.

[1] Rom. xv. 4.

God have mercy on me and forgeve me my giltes, and nameliche my translaciouns and of endityng in worldly vanitees, whiche I revoke in my retraccioun, as is the book of Troyles,[1] the book also of Fame, the book of twenty-five Ladies, the book of the Duchesses, the book of seint Valentines day and of the Parlement of briddes, the Tales of Caunturbury, alle thilke that sounen into synne, the book of the Leo, and many other bokes, if thay were in my mynde or remembraunce, and many a song and many a leccherous lay, of the whiche Crist for his grete mercy forgive me the synnes. But of the translacioun of Boce de consolacioun, and other bokes of consolacioun and of legend of lyves of seints, and Omelies, and moralitees, and devocioun, that thanke I oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and his moder, and alle the seintes in heven, bisekyng hem that thay fro hennysforth unto my lyves ende sende me grace to biwayle my gultes, and to studien to the savacioun of my soule, and graunte me grace and space of verray repentaunce, penitence, confessioun, and satisfaccioun, to don in this present lif, thurgh the benigne grace of him, that is king of kynges and prest of alle prestis, that bought us with his precious blood of his hert, so that I moote be oon of hem at the day of doom that schal be saved; *qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen.*

[1] Of the works here enumerated, all are extant except that called *The Book of the Leo.* It is ascribed to Chaucer by Lydgate in his Prologue to Boccaccio. Tyrwhitt conjectures that it 'may possibly have been a translation of *Le dit du Lion*, a poem of Guillaume de Machant, written in the year 1342.' *The Book of Twenty-five Ladies* is probably *The Legende of Gode Women*; but this consists of the lives of nineteen ladies only. Tyrwhitt supposes that xxv. was written by mistake for xix. *The Book of the Duchesses* (Tyrwhitt reads *Duchess*) probably refers to the two poems sometimes so called, one of which is also entitled *The Dreame of Chaucer.* By the 'legend of lyves of seints' may possibly be meant the stories related by the Prioresse and Second Nonne in *The Canterbury Tales.* The allusions in *The Legend of Gode Women* to some of these pieces as distinct works, confirms the fact that the tales and poems had got into circulation from time to time as they were written.

THE COURTS OF LOVE.

THERE is no feature in the history of Western civilization so striking in its character, or important in its results, as that respectful and profound devotion to the female sex which appears to have first sprung up in the south of France, and which found its earliest poetical expression in the lays of the Troubadours. At what period this signal change in the position of women took place, investing them with a sovereignty from which the poetry of subsequent ages has drawn its chief inspiration, and which modern gallantry has permanently confirmed, cannot be accurately determined. Many circumstances prepared the way for its gradual adoption; and there can be no doubt that the ameliorating influence of the Christian dispensation directed and encouraged the tendency towards that revolution in the relation of the sexes which, passing from one stage to another, attained its highest development in the ordinances and ceremonials of chivalry. Traces of this spirit may be discerned so far back as the tenth century; but it is in the Provençal poetry, which dates from the early part of the twelfth century, that we must look for the evidences of the time when it became intimately blended with the usages and manners of the people.

In the poetry of the East, and of classical antiquity, love is one of many elements; in the poetry of the Troubadours it is the essential ingredient. A still more remarkable distinction presents itself in the treatment of the passion by the Provençal writers. The love of the oriental and classical poets, voluptuous and imaginative, abounding in the sense of the beautiful, sometimes severely chaste, and occasionally even moral, reflected states of society in which women either held an inferior, and, not unfrequently, a degraded place, or were excluded from general intercourse altogether, and re-

garded only as toys to fill up hours of dalliance and relaxation. This love is never ennobled by higher feelings; it never exhibits the deference of supplication, the servitude of the heart, the vicissitudes of hope and fear, the long train of emotions that mark the course of the suitor who looks up to the object of his devotion as to a superior power, and who recognises in the decrees of his mistress the force of a law. It is not restrained by a sentiment of respect, nor elevated by a tone of purity. It is seldom inspired by tenderness—the involuntary tribute which strength pays to gentleness; and its gallantry, at best, is personal, and never founded on an admission of the general ascendancy of the sex. Here, then, is the distinction that indicates the point of departure from all antecedent poetry of the Provençal bards. In their works, for the first time, we discover the delicacy and reserve, the implicit loyalty, the absorbing ardour, the punctilious courtesy, and chivalric homage which, more or less modified by local circumstances, subsequently spread over the literature of the whole of Europe.

Whether the poetry of the Troubadours originated in the particular condition of society of which, in its more advanced and matured forms, it is the exponent; or, re-acting upon society, produced the conventional refinement it represents, is less certain than that the poetry and the life of what may be called the Provençal period were identical in character. The same deferential gallantry and gracious observances towards women, which are so conspicuous in the writings of the Troubadours, pervaded the entire intercourse of the higher classes in the south of France, and were carried to a height of unexampled luxury of sentiment down to the close of the fourteenth century, when the sedater Muse of Italy superseded the gay and brilliant lyrics of France.

Closely associated with the Provençal poetry were those institutions called the Courts of Love, the special product of an age when love was considered the paramount business of life, and supplied the great staple of occupation for persons the most distinguished by rank, fortune, beauty, and genius.

It is difficult for us, in our more material times, to comprehend the importance attached to such tribunals, or the subjects upon which they are said to have adjudicated; but of their existence, and the respect in which their decisions were held, we possess sufficient evidence, although not of that close and exact character which would enable us to define their constitution very accurately, or to separate the reality of their functions from the fantastical accessories by which we find them surrounded. The influence of these institutions, and of the peculiar temperament of that poetry with which they were directly connected, is visible in the writings of Boccaccio and Petrarch, and is constantly felt in the minor poems of Chaucer, who drew from these sources many suggestions which he wrought into new shapes more exquisite than his originals. Thus, in the first of the following pieces, he borrows his title from the tribunals which owed their existence to the Troubadours, and in the progress of the poem he imitates one of those poetical contentions which it was the province of the Courts of Love to decide.[1] In *The Assembly of Foules*, he convokes a Parliament of Birds, similar to an assembly over which the God of Love is represented in one of the *fabliaux* as presiding in person, where a question brought before his court is settled by single combat.[2] *The Floure and the Leaf*, and *The Complaint of Pité*, are formed upon the same principles, and breathe the same spirit of gallantry; and it is indispensable to a full appreciation of the significance

[1] Warton says that Chaucer's *Court of Love* is nothing more than the Court of Love of Provence, and that it contains the twenty statutes which that Court prescribed to be universally observed under the severest penalties. This is a mistake. The poem is not designed as a representation of the Court whose title it bears, and the statutes are purely imaginary.

[2] Le Grand, in his edition of the *Fabliaux*, observes that this extraordinary manner of deciding the process was resorted to in certain cases in failure of proof, and that, according to the spirit of the age, the issue was regarded as the judgment. This was true, no doubt, with reference to the *duel à outrance* and the *combat judiciaire*; but it does not appear how such an appeal to arms could be entertained on these grounds, in cases where the question to be resolved was simply a matter of opinion, and was unsusceptible of proofs.

of all these pieces, and of many isolated passages elsewhere, which have a direct bearing upon the erotic jurisprudence, and the characteristics of the age in which it flourished, that some account should be given of the Courts of Love as a general introduction to the minor poems. This is the more necessary, as in the history of our literature these tribunals, which certainly exerted a considerable influence over our early poetry, have hitherto been passed over in silence.[1] Nor need it be pointed out, as an additional reason for entering upon this subject, that the minor poems of Chaucer are now edited, both as to text and annotation, for the first time.

The Courts of Love derived their origin from an intellectual necessity, arising in a society almost exclusively engrossed by the polemics of love. The dialectic tendency of the age imparted to the erotic discussions a spirit of subtlety which opened up an infinite variety of questions for adjudication; and the popular poetry, adapting itself to the prevailing taste, shaped these problems of passion into distinct propositions, exhausting the arguments at both sides, and leaving the decision to be settled by persons whose position and experience gave authority to their judgments. At first, probably, this species of metaphysical investigation into the conditions of love was regarded merely as an ingenious pastime; but it afterwards assumed a more formal aspect, and ultimately acquired the character and weight of a social institution.

In the Jeux-Partis of the Provençal poets we have the records of the abstract questions which it was one of the functions of the Courts of Love to decide. These Jeux-Partis, also called tensons, or contentions, are distinguished by their subjects and forms from all other kinds of French poetry, and have nothing in common with the military or love songs, or the *Pastourelles* of the Troubadours. They consist gene-

[1] The only instance in which I am aware that the Courts of Love have received any illustration in English literature is an article in *The Retrospective Review*, vol. v.—a sketch in which D'Auvergne's work, *Les Arrêts d'Amour*, seems to be treated almost as an authentic record. It is scarcely necessary to say that the cases given in that ingenious work are entirely fictitious.

rally of a series of stanzas in which a question is debated *pour et contre*. In the first stanza, the poet advances an opinion, or states two contradictory propositions, one of which he adopts; a second person, whom he introduces, defends the opposite side; and after the altercation has been carried on for some time, a third person interposes who decides between them; or the decision is vested in the last speaker; or, as is more frequently the case, the discussion is left unfinished, and the matter in dispute is referred to the arbitration of certain persons who are usually named at the close of the tenson. It sometimes happened that a poet who, in his jeu-parti, decided a question of love, arrived at a conclusion adverse to the prevailing sentiments of society; upon which another poet, re-opening the subject, espoused the popular view. The discussion thus raised led to interminable disputes, which were taken up with as much heat of controversy as if they involved the national honour or the safety of the state; and the only means of appeasing the feud was to submit the case to the verdict of an absolute tribunal, whose authority was held to be final by poth parties.[1] Hence the Courts of Love exercised, by common assent, an arbitrary jurisdiction of opinion.

The nature of the questions proposed in the tensons may be partly inferred from the following specimens: but the majority of the points litigated—exhibiting that strange combination of licentiousness and deliberate reasoning which was the characteristic of a peculiar state of society—do not admit of being illustrated by examples. The subjects ran into the two extremes of open libertinism on the one hand, and enthusiastic devotion, pushed almost to fanaticism, on the other. They embraced almost every conceivable dilemma that can be supposed to occur in the affairs of love; and, while they display a profound knowledge of the erotic philosophy, or theory of love, they also show that the cultivation

[1] *Fabliaux et Contes.* Par Le Grand d'Aussy. Edited by Renouard. Paris, 1829.

of the passion in the epoch of the Troubadours was of the most thoroughly practical character.

A lover has had two mistresses: the one gives him her heart only after a long pursuit; the other does not keep him long in suspense. To which of the two does he owe the greater obligation?

One lover is so jealous that he is alarmed at the merest trifle; another is so confident of the truth of his mistress, that he is not affected even by the most palpable grounds of jealousy. Which of the two gives the stronger proof of love?

Two ladies have each a lover: that of the first desires to display his valour at a tournament, for which he makes the necessary preparations, but being forbidden by his mistress to attend it, he obeys; the second lady, on the contrary, orders her lover to repair to the same tournament, and, although he is neither strong nor courageous, he instantly departs for the lists. Which of the two lovers shows the greater devotion?[1]

Which would you prefer—that your mistress should be dead, or married to another?

Which suffers the more—the husband whose wife, or the lover whose mistress, is unfaithful?

Which is more to be condemned—he who boasts of favours that have not been granted to him, or he who publishes favours he has received?

I love a woman whose feelings I have been unable to move; another offers me her heart. Should I renounce the former, or continue to serve her?

Which is the more happy—an old woman who becomes devoted to a young man, or an old man who falls in love with a young mistress?

Which would you prefer—a mistress not handsome but very sensible, or not sensible but very handsome?

Which employs his time better—he who devotes himself to a woman of sense in the hope of winning her, or he who devotes himself to a fool whom he has already won?[2]

The plan, or idea, of the tenson long supplied a favourite exercise with the French poets, and many examples of it are to be found in our own literature.

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[1] These examples are given by M. Parfait in his *Histoire du Théâtre Français*. 1735.

[2] *Fabliaux*. Edited by Renouard.

The subjects selected for discussion in the tensons throw considerable doubt on the statements made by some writers that, notwithstanding the warmth and directness of the topics and language which entered into the proceedings of the Courts of Love, they really involved no licentiousness; that the erotic literature was merely a conventional diction which, like our Euphuism, had grown up into a sort of fashion, and was not to be interpreted in its literal, but in its poetical sense; and that the manners, thus glowing and ardent on the surface, were pure and innocent beneath This is incredible. If such questions as those cited by Le Grand, Renouard, and Raynouard,[1] or such as are preserved by Alain Chartier,[2] or some of the cases recorded by André,[3] were really investigated by the Courts of Love, it is utterly impossible to conceive that the ladies and gentlemen who debated these knotty points relating to the intimate commerce of the sexes could have dealt with them as playful fancies, or abstract exercises, or, indeed, that they could have understood them in any other sense than that which they unequivocally express.

[1] *Choix des Poesies Originales des Troubadours.* 1817.

[2] Alain Chartier gives many similar questions from the old *chansonniers;* but, instead of being a contention in verse, and by couplets, they consist simply of a question and answer. In most cases, the answers adopt the licentious alternative.

[3] André, who was chaplain to the Court of France, is the earliest authority upon the constitution of the Courts of Love. He is supposed to have flourished about the beginning of the fourteenth century, but no particulars concerning him have reached us, except such as may be gathered from his writings. Of these rare tracts, one is of the fifteenth century, under the title of *Tractatus amoris et de amoris remedio Andreæ capellani papæ Innocenti IV.;* and another, dated 1610, is entitled *Erotica seu amatoria Andreæ capellani regii.* Raynouard discovered a third in the Bibliothèque of Paris, called *Incipit liber de arte amandi et de reprobatione amoris.* The entire work forms a sort of epitome of laws for the government of lovers, dedicated to one Gautier, to whom André addresses himself in person throughout, in some instances supporting his propositions by examples drawn, or professing to be drawn, from his own experience. The treatment is succinct and methodical, and certain general principles are laid down by way of introduction; such as, What is love? When is it called passion? Between what persons should love exist? What are the effects of love? What persons are most predisposed, or best qualified, to love? At what age should the man and the woman begin to love? &c.

It is obvious that the conduct of the affairs of love was the absorbing study of life; and it is no less certain, from the rules set up and the judgments delivered, that the circle of the gay science comprehended and recognised every conceivable form of intrigue.[1] The fact that the husband was designated as an allegorical personage under the name of Danger,[2] and that other hindrances in the pursuits of love were personified by similarly expressive terms, which had a valid and established significance in the pleadings before the courts, shows that particular forms were understood and accepted, by which all the features of a case could be presented in detail, without implicating certain individuals, whose honour would be compromised by the disclosure. The object seems to have been to reduce the matter in dispute to its elements, and to decide upon what might be called the point of law, with as little reference as possible to the persons concerned.

The decorum and regularity which pervaded these singular proceedings contrast curiously with their practical disturbance of social relations. But it was an age of contradictions, in which an abandoned condition of morals was not considered incom-

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[1] One of the cases recorded by André as having been submitted to adjudication will sufficiently illustrate this statement. A lady attached to a knight by the closest intercourse marries another; is she justified in repulsing her former lover, and refusing to receive him as before? Upon this, Ermengarde of Narbonne pronounces the following judgment:—The intervention of the marital claim does not exclude the rights of the first attachment, unless the lady had previously renounced her lover, and formally declared that she renounced him for ever.

[2] In *The Court of Love*, Chaucer introduces this character as the chief councillor of the King in the Palace of Love—see *post*, p. 135; but it does not appear that in this instance Danger sustains the *role* assigned to him by the Provençal writers, although the general design of the allegorical machinery is evidently drawn from them. Chaucer's Palace of Love is taken from André, who places it in the midst of the universe. But Chaucer, improving as usual on his original, carries out the symbolical picture in the structure of the building, by making it round.—See *post*, p. 138, note 2. André's temple is square, with four doors of great magnificence, three of which are the entrances for the different orders of ladies, the fourth, that looking to the east, being reserved exclusively for the god of love.

patible with the utmost refinement in manners and the most punctilious gallantry. Nor is this apparent inconsistency more surprising than some of the usages exacted from women, who, although treated with a homage amounting almost to idolatry, were, under certain circumstances, required to repay all this chivalrous reverence by many forms which, in these days, would be regarded as humiliations. Thus, the vanquished knight in the *fabliau* of *Les Trois Chevaliers et la Chemise*, sends back the bloody chemise to the lady of the chateau, requesting her to wear it over her dress, when, in the presence of her husband and his guests, assembled in full festival, she waits at table with her damsels; and the lady, as a proof of her heroism and devotion, obeys an injunction which, in any other region of opinion, would have covered her with disgrace. In this incident we have an indication of a custom frequently alluded to in the lays and *fabliaux*, which marks one of the phases of the domestic condition of ladies. When the husband entertained company, the wife and the women of her household served the guests at table; and when a visitor of distinction arrived, the lady, attended by her daughters and her women, went out to meet him, assisted him to descend, took off his armour with her own hands, and robed him in the more commodious dress which was kept in reserve for such occasions. On the return of her husband, she went out in the same way, and held his stirrup while he dismounted. Whenever a lady spoke of a knight, she always called him Monseigneur. There would be no difficulty in tracing these customs to an origin which would present them in a light of pure affection and primitive simplicity; but, associated with the state of morals revealed by the processes of the Courts of Love, they forfeit all pretensions to that character.

Originally, the Courts of Love were convened merely to settle questions raised in the tensons; they had scarcely any formal existence; and their functions might be described as the *jeux-d'esprit* of the salons. But they soon acquired a more extended jurisdiction. From deciding questions of

love, they came at last to exercise an authority over the conduct of lovers.

Of the constitution of these Courts we learn some particulars collected from various sources. The judges were selected from amongst people of the highest rank of both sexes, all of them persons whose experience, taste, and intimate knowledge of the usages of the world rendered them conversant with the nature of the affairs they were required to adjudicate upon. Sometimes they were presided over by a lady, who was called the Queen of Love. The most celebrated of the female presidents were Queen Eléonore, first married to Louis VII. of France, and afterwards to Henry II. of England; the famous Countess of Champagne; the Viscountess Ermengarde of Narbonne; and the Countess of Flanders.[1] André records several of the decisions of these ladies. Sometimes the president was a gentleman, who was called the Prince of Love, an office alternately held by Richard Cœur de Lion, Alphonsus of Arragon, the Dauphin of Auvergne, and the Count of Provence; and, in their absence, by the principal nobility of the province.[2] The assemblies commenced their sittings in the mouth of May, in an open field, under an elm-tree, and hence were called *Gieux* [*jeux*] *sous l'ormel.*[3] In the southern provinces, where they originated, and where the *chansons* were in universal circulation, and the subjects of dispute entered into the daily conversation of society, they multiplied rapidly. In the north, their progress was slower and less brilliant. The judges were profoundly versed in all the *tracasseries* of love, and the forms and ceremonials of chivalry. Their power was unbounded, and their sentences were

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[1] The names of the Lady Presidents, are attached to most of the judgments given by André. Thus Queen Eléonore is designated *Regina Alienora;* the Countess of Champagne, *M.* (the initial of her name, Marie) *Comitissa Campaniæ;* the Viscountess Ermengarde of Narbonne, *Mingarda* or *Domina Narbonensis;* and the Countess of Flanders, (identified by Raynouard with Sybil of Anjou, married in 1134 to the Count Thierry) *Comitissa Flandriæ.*

[2] Moreri on the word Troubadour—quoted by Leber.

[3] Le Grand.

irreversible. They not only sat to hear complaints, but were invested with authority to summon delinquents before them. They investigated the merits of the cause; pronounced judgment, and imposed penalties; ordained a separation between the parties, or prescribed the form of reconciliation. Their sentences were sometimes fantastical, and sometimes had a practical effect; in some cases they banished the guilty from the kingdom of love, or marked him by an ignominious name; in others, they assessed pecuniary damages, levied confiscation of goods, and even ordered corporal punishments. Their sentences, which were called *Arrêts d'Amour*, were long regarded in France as a collection of authoritative precedents, and were held in such implicit respect that nobody ever ventured to appeal from them.

It is not easy to discriminate between those cases that were really disposed of before the tribunals, and those that were purely suppositious, and drawn up, like the tensons, as an exercise of imagination. In some instances, where the God of Love is introduced in person presiding over his Court, surrounded by an assembly of birds, or where other fanciful particulars overlay the proceedings, we may detect the invention of the poet; but even in these instances we cannot be always sure that the poetical form of the report is not designedly adopted, and that actual persons may not be implied under an allegorical representation. The authenticity of the circumstances, however, is comparatively unimportant, since there can be no doubt that all the cases collected, whether process issued upon them or not, reflect faithfully the general spirit and special objects of the institution. The following example, attested by André, exhibits the Court of Love exercising one of its most important functions, in the correction of a delinquency which was considered a crime of the greatest magnitude.

A knight loved a lady whom he had few opportunities of meeting, and it was accordingly agreed between them that they should hold their communications through the medium of his secretary. By this means they were enabled to keep

up their intercourse in secret. But the secretary, violating the confidence reposed in him, addressed the lady on his own behalf, and was listened to favourably. The knight denounced the affair to the Countess of Champagne, requesting that the delinquent should be tried by her, and the other ladies forming her court. The accused assented to the tribunal; and the Countess, having summoned about sixty ladies, heard the case, and pronounced this judgment:—That the deceitful lover had found a woman worthy of him, and should be left to the enjoyment of the pleasure he had so basely acquired; but that both should be excluded, to all perpetuity, from the love of all other persons; and that neither the one nor the other should ever after appeal to the assembly of ladies, or to the courts of knights, the lover having violated the faith of chivalry, and the lady having sacrificed the principles of modesty when she degraded herself to the love of a secretary.

The Court before which this suit was preferred consisted exclusively of ladies; and it may be gathered from the latter clause of the judgment that there were other courts composed entirely of knights. In addition to these were the mixed tribunals, to which frequent references are made by the Provençal historians; but the majority of the judgments preserved by André, are drawn from courts which were held by ladies alone. The following is another of his cases:—

A knight sought the love of a lady, but without success. He sent her several valuable presents, which she accepted graciously, and even with an appearance of ardour; still, however, repulsing his addresses with her habitual severity. Under these circumstances, the knight complained that she had deceived him into a false hope by accepting his presents. Judgment on the case was given by Queen Eléonore, in these words: It is ruled, either that a woman shall refuse presents that are offered to her in the name of love; or that she shall reward them; or that she must submit without a murmur to be reduced to the rank of venal courtesans.

These judgments are honourable to the tribunals; and it

must be allowed, in spite of the evidence of the amatory tensons, that whenever questions came to be heard which could be adjudicated in favour of the legal rights of society, without contravening any erotic rights, the court was not unwilling to extend its protection to that numerous class of husbands and fathers of families who may be described as being outside its jurisdiction. There are certainly few instances in point; and the example that follows is rather an evasion than a solution of a proposition which, had it been settled by a declaratory decision, might have thrown some light upon the subject.

The question submitted is, Whether between lovers, or married people, there existed the greater affection, or the more lively attachment? The judgment runs thus: Conjugal attachment and the tender affection of lovers are sentiments of manners and of nature totally different; and there cannot be established a just comparison between objects which bear no resemblance to each other, and have nothing in common.[1]

This judgment was pronounced by Ermengarde of Navarre, who, on another occasion, already quoted, declared that marital claims did not justify a woman in dismissing a former lover, unless she had distinctly renounced him before marriage. It is clear that the erotic code not only set the rights of love above all others, but that they were the only rights it practically recognised. At the same time, it would have punished any dishonourable means of acquiring them; such as the betrayal of friendship, the violation of the laws of hospitality, inconstancy to previous vows, or the practice of duplicity or false-

[1] The controversy as to the relative merits of the two estates of love frequently occupied the dialectic dexterity of the Troubadours. Gui d'Uisel, an ecclesiastic, who fell in love with a lady of Provence, expended much pains, as it appeared to no effect, in endeavouring to prove that the faith of a lover is more honourable than that of a husband, on the ground that the shame of inconstancy was his bond, and that if he sinned against love he offended all the laws of gallantry, and was degraded for ever. The lady, however, was not disposed to adopt this reasoning, and, dismissing the Troubadour, soon afterwards married a knight of Catalonia. The story is related by Sainte-Palaye.

hood; and to that extent it respected established privileges and the conventions of society.

In many of the cases, especially those adjudicated by the Countess of Champagne, the modern reader, acquainted with the general character of mediæval jurisprudence, cannot fail to be struck by the remarkable equity of the decisions, the closeness of statement, and the precision with which the points of law, so to speak, stripped of all extraneous incidents, are elicited. The matter itself was frequently trivial, but the judgment was always weighty. We have an illustration of this quality of legal clearness and penetration applied to a very slight matter in a suit prosecuted by a lady against her lover. It appeared that she had imposed upon him a strict condition that he should not utter her praises in public; but, being in a large company, and hearing her spoken of unworthily, he could not restrain his feelings, and entered warmly into her defence. The lady appealed to the tribunal, contending that, as he had broken the condition, he was no longer entitled to her favours. The Countess of Champagne decreed against her, on the ground that the condition was illegal, and, therefore, nugatory. The higher obligation of the knight required that he should defend his lady. The following case exhibits a more elaborate and important example of erotic law:—

A knight had been for a long period of time engaged on a foreign expedition, beyond seas, and his mistress not receiving any communications from him, and being in doubt whether he would ever return, bestowed her regards on another lover. The secretary of the first lover hereupon cited her to appear before the Court of the Countess of Champagne, to which she assented. In her defence she pleaded the seventh statute of the Code of Love,[1] and maintained that, if it were lawful for

[1] *Biennalis viduitas pro amante defuncto superstiti præscribitur amanti.* There appear to have been several codes, and decalogues of love, all founded pretty much on the same general principles, but differing materially in the details. André has Thirteen Precepts; a MS. of the fifteenth century, in the library of Wolfenbuttel, contains one set of the Ten Commandments of Love; and Martin Franc, in his

a widow to marry two years after the decease of her former husband, she was justified in transferring her favours to another, her former lover, during that long space of time, not having sent either message or messenger to her, although he had many opportunities of doing so. The Court pronounced judgment in favour of the plaintiff, holding that the defendant should not have renounced her lover except upon the clearest proofs of his infidelity. The Court, however, desired it to be understood that absence could be justified only by unavoidable necessity, or some noble motive. In the defendant's circumstances, it ought to have been a source of pride and satisfaction to know that her lover was acquiring fame and honour abroad. As to his not writing, it arose, probably, from a prudential desire to preserve the secret of his attachment; for, although he might have sent sealed letters, yet the contents of them were liable to be discovered by the treachery, or death, of his messenger on the journey.

All these examples are drawn from cases reported in the fourteenth century as having been actually carried before the Courts. Further illustrations might be derived from other sources, particularly from the famous work of Martial d'Auvergne, a lawyer and poet, who flourished towards the close of the fifteenth century;[1] but they are not entitled to

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Champion des Dames, supplies another. They vary considerably; but all insist on the virtues of constancy and secrecy, obedience to the will of ladies, and the prohibition of coarse or evil speaking.

[1] *Les Arrêts d'Amour.* The *arrêts*, introduced by a preface in verse, are fifty-three in number, and include almost every variety of case. They are drawn up in a strictly technical form, and exhibit in happy combination the wit and legal acumen of the author. The publication had extraordinary success; and was afterwards edited and annotated with great erudition by Benoit de Court, a celebrated jurisconsult of the sixteenth century, who undertook to confirm the judgments of the Courts of Love by the authority of the Roman laws, the decisions of the Fathers of the Church, and the testimony of the Greek and Latin poets. The edition with the commentaries was printed at Lyons in 1533, at Rouen in 1587, and at Amsterdam in 1731. It is frequently referred to and quoted by modern writers on the Provençal literature. Martial also published an historical poem on the death of Charles VII., consisting of 6,000 or 7,000 verses of different measures; some pious fables in verse in praise of the Virgin Mary; and an extravagant

the same degree of credit. Martial professes to give an exact account of the Courts of Love, and to describe the personages of whom they were composed, even to their costume.[1] Neither his suits nor his pleadings, however, are authentic. The institution, of which he speaks as an eye-witness, was extinct long before he was born; and his technical forms are merely the elaborate badinage of a witty jurisconsult. Nevertheless, his book, regarded as a piece of imaginative history, in which the traits rather than the veritable incidents of the epoch are reproduced, possesses a certain kind of collateral value; and in this point of view suggests two or three points for consideration.

We gather from this work, which at least reflects the spirit of the usages of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that the Courts did not confine their functions to questions of love, but that they also took cognizance of questions of manners and decorum; so that they appear to have regulated to a great extent the general usages of society. They gave a shape and definite authority to that public opinion whose *dicta* they pronounced; and, consequently, we find that the most frivolous matters afforded them as much occupation as the gravest concerns of injured lovers and wilful mistresses. One of the suits drawn up by Martial is an action brought by a lady, in the nature of trover, for a kiss. The defendant pleaded that he had long loved the plaintiff, and that she had faithfully promised to give him the said kiss, but that, from time to time, she made divers excuses; and that, after having been three months in pursuit of the said kiss, he took it one day, when Danger (*i.e.*, the lady's husband) was absent. To this plea, the plaintiff replied that the promise was only conditional, to be fulfilled at her own will and pleasure. This

poem on the passion of love, the scene of which is placed in a convent. The whole of Martial's poems were collected and published in Paris in 1724. He died in 1508.

[1] Amongst other particulars, he informs us that the ladies who presided at the tribunals were habited in green, and wore collars of gold, and that they used such strong perfumes as to throw everybody who approached them into a fit of sneezing.

rejoinder being duly traversed by the defendant, the Court gave judgment against the plaintiff, and condemned her not only to pay all the costs, but to perform her promise, without taking the former salute into account. In another action, a lover demands redress against his mistress, for refusing to dance with him, without assigning a reasonable cause, and for treating him with disdain when he made a courteous obeisance to her. The defendant having suffered judgment to go by default, the Court decided that the defendant should dance with the plaintiff whether she liked it or not, and that the plaintiff should be exempt from the ceremony of bowing to her. A third action is against a lady for pricking her lover with a pin while she was bestowing a kiss upon him. The defendant denied the kiss, which she said was taken, and not given, and asserted that the wound, if any, was by accident. The wound, however, being proved by medical certificates, the Court awarded that the defendant should kiss it at all reasonable times till it was healed. Amongst these suits there is one for which, it may be presumed, there could have been no real precedent—an action brought by a young married lady against her husband, for prohibiting her from wearing a gown and bonnet of the last fashion. In this case the Court referred the question to arbitration, appointing two milliners as referees. There is no authentic instance of an appeal to these tribunals for the settlement of domestic differences. Such matters were clearly out of their jurisdiction.

That the Courts of Love exercised a tangible influence—much in the same way as the expression of opinion in exclusive circles may now be said to exercise an influence over the conduct of individuals—appears to be established by a multitude of scattered proofs, although it may be difficult to obtain such evidence of their constitution and practice as should be considered satisfactory in an historical aspect. They are frequently alluded to in the *Fabliaux;* they are referred to by Boccaccio;[1] the tensons, out of which they sprung, were

[1] 'Molte fiate già, nobilissima donna, avenne, che io, il quale quasi dalla mia puerizia nisino a questo tempo ne servigi d'amore sono stato,

imitated in the early literature of Germany;[1] the Popes protected and encouraged them;[2] and Frederic Barbarossa instituted similar courts in his empire. The localities in which some of the principal tribunals were established are recorded by different writers. One of the troubadours speaks of a Court of Love at Pierre-Feu; others are mentioned as having been held at Romanin and at Lignes; and they seem to have reached their greatest splendour at Avignon during the residence of the Popes in that place. They came in and went out with the Troubadours, and maintained their reputation and power for upwards of two hundred years, from about 1120 to nearly the close of the fourteenth century. Their fall is dated from the death of Joanna, Queen of Naples, and Countess of Provence, in 1382, the last patroness of the Provençal poets. They were revived afterwards, but rather in the shape of pageants than of bodies exerting an action upon society. During the reign of Charles VI., a tribunal for trying questions of love was established at Court, under the title of *Cours amoureuses*. It was constituted with all the formalities and pomp that surrounded the court of the sovereign, and had its presidents, councillors, and masters of requests; its auditors, knights of honour, secretaries, and royal

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retrovandomi nella sua coste tra li gentili uomini e le vaghe donne, ia quella con me parmiente dimoranti, udii muovere e disputare questa questione, cioè: uno giovane ferventemente ama una donna, della quale ninna altra cosa gli è conceduto dalla fortuna, se non il potere alcuna volta vederla, o tal volta di lei ragionare, o seco stesso di lei dolcemente pensare. Qual'è adunque di queste tre cose di più diletto.' —*Proemio dell' autore*, prefixed to Boccaccio's *Filostrato*.

[1] 'Il y a réminiscence de la tenson ou du jeu-parti dans l'ancienne lyrique Allemande. On y soulève également, par forme de passe-temps poétiques, des questions d'amour. Mais il n'en est pas résulté un genre particulier de poésies. Un Minnesinger dit:—

Die Friunde habent mir ein Spiel getheilt.

Les amis m'ont partagé un jeu. Remarquez l'expression *ein Spiel theilen*. C'est identiquement le provençal *Joc partir*.'—Note by Baron Roisin on *Essai sur les Cours d'Amour*.

[2] It is recorded that when the Counts de Vintimille and de Tende visited Innocent VI., he gave them the spectacle of one of these *séances*, the magnificence of which is said to have struck them with astonishment.

attendants. The principal offices were filled by princes of the blood, the highest nobility in the kingdom, magistrates, priests, canons, and the most distinguished ecclesiastics.[1] In the Fête-Dieu instituted by King René at Aix, in the fifteenth century, the ceremonies of the procession, headed by a Prince d'Amour, were founded upon the precedents of the Courts of Love;[2] and several attempts were made in Italy to renew the forms of the ancient gallantry. But the spirit of the age of chivalry was extinct, and it was no longer possible to restore its institutions.

As the object of this brief notice is to explain the origin and general nature of the erotic tribunals only so far as such an exposition might be useful to the readers of Chaucer's poetry, I have not attempted to enter upon the historical questions arising out of the enquiry: Were they regular courts, or mere coteries of ladies who amused themselves with debates on points of etiquette and gallantry? Were the appeals made in jest or earnest? Were the suits real or fictitious? M. Raynouard, and most of the writers on Provençal literature, maintain that the Courts of Love had a positive existence, supported, not by the force of law, but by that which had the full efficacy of law—social opinion. Professor Diez, of Bonn, takes the opposite side, and sustains it with learning and ability.[3] He contends that the evidence is vague and incomplete; that the publicity which must have attended the proceedings would have been incompatible with the honour of

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[1] The connexion of the religious orders with the Courts of Love is indicated apparently in *The Canterbury Tales*, where the Monk is described as having a pin in the shape of a true lover's knot, and the Prioress a brooch with a crowned A, and the motto *Amor vincit omnia*. They seem to have taken love to mean charity in its largest sense—the generic term comprehending all the species.

[2] The details of this revival are contained in a work, referred to by Leber, entitled *Explication des cérémonies de la Fête-Dieu d'Aix en Provençe, ornée des figures du lieutenant de prince d'amour, du roi de la basoche*, &c.

[3] For the fullest view of the subject, see the annotated translation of Diez' treatise by Baron Roisin, published in Paris in 1842, entitled *Essai sur les Cours d'Amour*.

the persons involved, and the safety of society; and he finally concludes that the whole system resolved itself into nothing more than the custom of submitting the quarrels of lovers to arbitration, and of discussing questions of love and manners with an air of intellectual subtlety. The difference between these views is not very material. The formality of the proceedings is of less importance than the fact that these arbitrations and discussions were established customs; and, as the arbitration was procured by common agreement, there can be no doubt that the judgment was implicitly respected. Nor is there any reason to suppose that the process was public, or even that the appellants were known. There seems to have been a prudential mystery observed in the management of the cases; and it is significant of the reserve with which the appeals were conducted that, although the records tell us who the judges were, there is not a single instance in which the names of the parties to the suits were suffered to transpire. If the Court of Love, therefore, was not an absolute institution invested with a defined authority, there is ample ground for believing that it imparted form and authenticity to the verdicts of opinion, and, in that sense, was clothed with the attributes of an actual tribunal.

Chaucer's poem, in which so much of the old Provençal spirit is transmitted to us, was first printed by Stowe in 1561. There is no MS. of it known to be in existence. From Stowe the text was copied by Speght, and has been carried down in subsequent editions. The orthography is evidently arbitrary and corrupt; and by reference to Stowe's and Speght's editions of *The Canterbury Tales*, which we possess the means of collating, we are enabled in some degree to determine the character of the aberrations. The editors were altogether ignorant of the distinction between unimportant variations in the orthography of Chaucer's time, and those that involved points of grammatical structure; and in their attempts to reconcile the original to the unsettled forms of

their own time, they appear to have been guided by no rules whatever. The result is a heap of confusion.

To adopt the text of Stowe would be to perpetuate a number of errors which we have the power by analogous examples to correct. On the other hand, it would be rash to deviate from it, in the absence of a MS. authority, without being supported in every instance by ascertained principles. With this consciousness of danger and responsibility, the orthography of the present edition has been assimilated, wherever it was possible, under the strictest conditions of security, with that of the Harleian MS., from which the text of *The Canterbury Tales* has been derived, the grammatical structure harmonized, and, so to speak, the antique colour of the diction restored. The care bestowed upon this minute toil might be illustrated by a multitude of obvious improvements, sometimes affecting the metre, and always bringing out the forms in which we have reason to believe Chaucer wrote; but a comparison between a few pages of this edition, and the corresponding passages in any other, will at once enable the reader to perceive and appreciate the nature of the changes. I cannot dismiss this part of the subject without again acknowledging the obligations I owe to Mr. Wright, who has given me his valuable aid in the patient revision of the text.

The reader will perceive that in this poem Chaucer has bestowed unusual pains upon the metre and the language. It has an air of finish which seldom distinguishes *The Canterbury Tales*. This is partly, no doubt, to be referred to the nature of the subject. The breadth of treatment which imparts life and vigour to a narrative, would be inconsistent with the demands of a didactic and descriptive poem. Something of this elegance, too, may be traced to the youth of the writer, who, in his first efforts, was studious of those more exact graces which, as he advanced in experience and confidence, he became less solicitous to cultivate.

Chaucer's Court of Love is not that of Provence; but its inspiration came from the same source, and it is marked throughout by the same features. It has its Temple, or

Palace, of Love, its Statutes of Love, its poetical contention, and its symbolical personages; by all of which its origin may be identified. The argument of the poem may be thus briefly laid down:—

Philogenet, of Cambridge, Clerk, is commanded by Mercury to appear at the Court of Venus. This leads to a description of the Castle of Love, in which Admetus and Alceste preside as King and Queen. Philogenet is next conducted by Philobone into the Temple, where he sees Venus and Cupid in a Tabernacle. The oath of allegiance and of obedience to the XX. Commandments of Love is now administered to the worshippers; and Philogenet is introduced to the lady Rosial, with whom he has fallen in love in a dream. He again appears in the presence of the King, who is surrounded by two orders of courtiers, the good and the bad; after which two courtiers, Golden and Leaden Love, enter. At this point there appears to be an hiatus, the next stanza opening with Rosial's confession of love. She tells Philogenet that he may remain with her till the 1st of May, when the grand festival of Love is to take place; and, finally, the festival is celebrated by a choir of birds, who sing a paraphrase of the Matins for Trinity Sunday in honour of the God.

The frequent use of theological terms, and the curious adaptation of the Church service at the close, seem to indicate, that the design was intended to convey an allegorical meaning, in the manner of Dante's *Divina Commedia*.

THE COURT OF LOVE.

WITH temerous herte and trembling hand of
Of cunning naked, bare of eloquence, [drede,
Unto the floure[1] of porte in womanhede
I write, as he that none intelligence
Of metres[2] hath, ne floures of sentence;
Sauf that me list my writing to convey,
In that I can to please her high nobley.

The blosmes freshe of Tullius' gardein sote
Presente[3] they not, my matter for to borne:
Poemes of Virgil taken here no rote,
Ne craft of Galfride[4] may not here sojourne:
Why nam I cunning? O well may I mourne,
For lack of science that I cannot write
Unto the princesse of my life aright

No termes digne unto her excellence,
So is she sprong of noble stirpe and highe:
A world of honour and of reverence
There is in her, this will I testifye.
Calliope,[5] thou suster wise and slye,
And thou, Minerva,[6] guide me with thy grace,
That language rude my matter not deface.

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[1] Floure means perfection of anything. It answers to the Latin *flores*.

[2] Chaucer appears to have early turned his attention to metrical accuracy. In the *Troylus and Creseide* he expresses his anxiety that none may *mismetre* or *miswrite* his poems. See Introd. vol. i., p. 48.

[3] This passage is obscure. The meaning seems to be, 'they (my writings) present not the fresh blossoms of Tullius' sweet garden.'

[4] Geoffrey de Vinsauf. See vol. iii. p. 232, note 1.

[5] Calliope, the chief of the Muses, literally *the beautiful-voiced*, to whom the epic poet owes his inspiration.

[6] The goddess of learning. The poet may possibly have had in his mind the line of Horace—

'Rusticus, abnormis sapiens, crassâque Minervâ.'

He prays to Minerva for *grace*, the theological term for supernatural influence, to guide him.

Thy sugar droppes sweet of Helicon[1]
Distil in me, thou gentle Muse, I pray;
And the, Melpomene,[2] I cal anon,
Of ignoraunce the mist to chase away;
And give me grace so for to write and say,
That she, my lady, of her worthinesse,
Accept in gree this little short treatesse,

That is entituled thus, The Court of Love.
And ye that ben metriciens[3] me excuse,
I you besech for Venus sake above;
For what I mean in this ye need not muse:[4]
And if so be my lady it refuse
For lack of ornate speech, I would be woe,
That I presume to her to writen so.

But my entent and all my busy oure
Is for to write this treatesse, as I can,
Unto my lady, stable, true, and sure,
Faithful and kind, sith first that she began
Me to accept in service as her man:[5]
To her be all the pleasure of this book,
That, whan her like, she may it rede and look.

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[1] The mountain of Bœotia, sacred to Apollo and the Musos.

[2] One of the Muses, literally *the Songstress*, by later writers supposed to inspire the tragic poet.

[3] See *ante*, p. 129, note 2.

[4] The meaning seems to be, You need not trouble yourselves with endeavouring to discover my meaning in this poem, for it is not intended for you, but for my lady.

[5] This is the technical term for vassal or liege-man, like the Latin *homo*, the Saxon *gama*, yeoman, and the French *homme*, none of which words expressed personal inferiority, but merely the obligation to perform certain services in respect of the tenure of land. A sovereign prince would thus do homage to, and acknowledge himself the *man* of, another prince, for some particular country or district; while he would consider himself quite at liberty to wage war against him on other grounds. Thus in the *Généalogie des Comtes de Boulogne*, published by M. Francisque Michel, the Count Hernekins becomes the *homme*, man, or vassal, of Count Baldwin of Flanders, in respect of the district of Merc. 'Si avint si entre l'oncle et le neveu que il fist un amaisnance de pais, en tel maniere que li quens Hernekins *devint hom* le Comte Bauduin de Flandres, sen oncle, de le tere de Merc, sans plus.'

WHAN I was young, at eighteen yere of age,
Lusty and light, desirous of pleasaunce,
Approaching on ful sad and ripe corage,[1]
Love arted[2] me to do my observaunce
To his estate, and done him obeisaunce,
Commanding me the Court of Love to see,
A lite beside the mount of Citharee,[3]

There Citherea goddesse was and quene
Honoured highly for her majeste;
And eke her son, the mighty god, I wene,
Cupid the blind, that for his dignite
A thousand lovers worship on their kne;
There was I bid, in pain of death, tappere,
By Mercury, the winged messengere.

So than I went by strange and fer countrees,
Enquiring aye what coast had to it drew
The Court of Love: and thitherward, as bees,
At last I seigh the people gan pursue: [knew
And [so] me thought some wight was there that
Where that the court was holden, ferre or nighe,
And after them ful fast I gan me hie.

Anon as I them overtook, I said,
'Hail frendes! whither purpose ye to wende?'
'Forsooth,' quoth one that answered lich a maid,
'To Loves Court now go we, gentil frende.'
'Where is that place,' quoth I, 'my fellow hend?'
'At Citheron, sir,' said he, 'withoute doubt,
The King of Love, and all his noble rout,

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[1] This expression is applied to Grisilde, vol. ii., p. 131.

[2] This word occurs again in the *Troylus and Cresceide*. It is Anglo-Norman:—the verb *arte*, to force, constrain, or compel to a thing, and represents the Latin *arcere*.

[3] There appears to be a confusion here between Cithæron, the mountain of Bœotia, sacred to Jupiter and the Muses, and the island Cythera, sacred to Venus, who is therefore called Citherea in the next line.

Dwelleth within a castle ryally.'
So than apace I journied forth amonge,
And as he said, so found I there truly.
For I beheld the toures highe and stronge,
And high pinacles, large of height and longe,
With plate of gold bespred on every side,
And precious stones, the stone werke for to hide.[1]

No sapphire of Inde, no ruby rich of price,
There lacked than, nor emerald so grene,
Balais Turkeis,[2] ne thing to my devise,
That may the castle maken for to shene:
All was as bright as sterres in winter been;
And Phœbus shone, to make his peace agein,
For trespass done to high estates twein,[3]

[1] The poet here describes a Gothic palace, but not of the style which prevailed in England and the north of Europe, where the severity of the climate forbids the use of colour, rich marbles or metal, in external work. The Temple of Love is an Italian Gothic palace of this period, of the appearance of which the following description, by the minute and observant Seigneur of Argenton, will give some idea. 'Les maisons [of Venice, to which city he was sent as ambassador by Charles VII. in 1494] sont fort grandes et hautes, et de bonnes pierres, et *les anciennes toutes peintes*, les autres faites depuis cent ans, ont le devant de *marbre blanc* qui leur vient d'Istrie, à cent milles de là; et encore ont *mainte grande pièce de porphyre et de serpentine* sur le devant.' —PHILIP DE COMMINES, *Livre* vii., c. 15. The dryness of the air in the south of Europe permitted the Gothic architect to indulge his taste for brilliant colouring even on his external walls; and the palaces and churches of mediæval Italy were accordingly encrusted with porphyry and serpentine, and resplendent with azure and green and gold.

[2] *Bales Turkes* in the printed editions. The true reading appears to be Balais Turkeis. Balais is the precious stone called the bastard ruby; but whether Turkes be an adjective qualifying balais, and meaning Turkish rubies, or a substantive meaning the stone turquoise, is not easily determined. The word Balais occurs in Philip de Commines' *History*, where he describes the treasury of Venice. 'En cette Chapelle est leur trésor, dont l'on parle, qui sont choses ordonnées pour parer l'eglise. Il y a douze ou quatorze gros ballays; je n'en ai vu aucuns si gros.'

[3] The allusion is to the song of the poet Demodocus of the loves of Ares and Aphrodite:—

—— ἄφαρ δέ οἱ ἄγγελος ἦλθεν
Ἥλιος ὁ σφ' ἐνόησε μιγαζομένους φιλότητι.
* * * * *
Ἥέλιος γάρ οἱ σκοπιὴν ἔχεν, εἶπέ τε μῦθον.
ΟΔΥΣΣΕΙΑΣ. Θ. 266.

Venus and Mars, the god and goddesse clere,
Whan he them found in armes chained faste:
Venus was than ful sad of herte and chere.
But Phœbus bemes, straight as is the maste,
Upon the castle ginneth he to caste,
To please the lady, princesse of that place,
In sign he loketh after Loves grace.

For there nis god in Heaven or Hel, ywis,
But he hath been right subject unto Love:
Jove, Pluto, or whatsoever he is,
Ne creature in earth, or yet above;
Of these the reverse may no wight approve.
But furthermore, the castle to descry,
Yet saw I never none so large and high.

For unto Heaven it stretcheth, I suppose,
Withinne and oute depeinted wonderly,
With many a thousand daisies,[1] rede as rose,
And white also, this saw I verily:
But who tho daisies might do signify,
Can I not telle, sauf that the quenes floure
Alceste[2] it was that kept there her sojoure;

Which under Venus lady was and quene,
And Admete king and soverein of that place,
To whom obeyed the ladies good ninetene,[3]

[1] The daisy or Marguerite has always been a favourite with poets and lovers of nature. But the peculiar honours attributed to it here in the *Floure and Leaf*, in the Prologue to the *Legende of Gode Women*, and in many other passages of his works, would lead to the supposition that Chaucer intended it to have a particular application.

[2] Apollo, when expelled from heaven, tended the flocks of Admetus, King of Pharæ, in Thessaly, and in recompense for his master's kindness obtained from the Parcæ that Admetus should never die, if any one would die for him. His wife Alceste consented to devote herself for his sake, and is, therefore, placed among those who have suffered martyrdom for love. Her story is more largely alluded to in the Prologue of the *Legende of Gode Women*.

[3] Thus in the Prologue to the *Legende of Gode Women*:—

'Behind this God of Love, upon the green,
I saw coming in ladies nineteen.'

In the legend itself, however, the histories of only nine are given. There is a short poem by Chaucer entitled *The nine Ladies worthie*.

With many a thousand other, bright of face.
And young men fele came forth with lusty pace,
And aged eke, their homage to dispose;
But what they were, I could not well disclose.

Yet nere and nere forth in I gan me dress
Into an halle of noble apparaile,
With arras[1] spread, and cloth of gold I guess,
And other silk of easier availe:[2]
Under the cloth of their estate[3] sauns fail,
The king and quene there sat, as I beheld:
It passed joy of Helisé[4] the feld.

There saints[5] have their comming and resort,
To seen the king so ryally besein,
In purple clad, and eke the quene in sort:[6]
And on their hedes saw I crownes twein,
With stones fret, so that it was no pain,
Withouten meat and drink, to stand and se
The kinges honour and the ryallty.

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[1] Arras, the capital of Artois, was early celebrated for its luxury, its patronage of the arts of music, poetry, and painting, and for its fabric of tapestry, which was hence called Arras. Adam de la Halle, commonly known as le *bossu* d'Arras, born in the year 1240, and one of the founders, as M. F. Michel believes, of the French drama, being obliged from political causes to leave it, thus expresses his regret:—

'Gilles, li peres Jehans Joie,
Au jouster n'estes mie eskieu;
De vos aves fait maint alieu,
Et maint *biau drap d'or et de soie*
Mis en feste.'

—*Théât. Franç.*, par MM. de Monmerqué et Fr. Michel. Paris, 1842, p. 22.

[2] Of easier attainment, *i. e.*, not so costly.

[3] A canopy, under which the throne was placed. Thus in the old stage directions we find, 'The king takes his state,' meaning takes his seat upon the throne. The expression occurs again in *The Assemblie of Ladies*:—

'Thus coming forth to sit in her estate,
In her presence we kneeled down everychone.'

[4] Elysium.

[5] The poet calls the martyrs for love *saints*, a use of theological terms which seems to point to an allegorical meaning.

[6] That is, the Queen was clad in a suit of the same colour, to correspond, or to match.

And for to treate of states with the king,[1]
That ben of council chief, and with the quene,
The king had Danger nere to him standing,
The Quene of Love, Disdain, and that was sene:
For by the faith I shal to God, I wene
Was never straunger none in her degree,
Than was the quene in casting of her ye.[2]

And as I stode perceiving her apart,
And eke the bemes shining of her eyen,
Me thought they weren shapen like a dart,
Sharpe and persing, and smalle and straight of line:
And all her here it shone as gold so fine,
Dishevel, crisp, down hanging at her back[3]
A yerde in length: and soothly than I spak:—

'O bright Regina, who made the so fair?
Who made thy colour vermelet and white?
Where wonneth that god? how far above the air?
Grete was his craft, and grete was his delight.
Now marvel I nothing that ye do hight
This Quene of Love, and occupy the place
Of Citharé: now, sweet lady! thy grace.'

In mewet[4] spake I so that nought astert,
By no condition, word that might be heard;
But in my inward thought I gan advert,
And ofte I said 'My wit is dulle and hard:'
For with her beauty, thus, God wot, I ferde
As doth the man yravished with sight,
Whan I beheld her crystal eyen so bright.

---

[1] The King had Danger standing near him, andthe Queen had Disdain, who were chief of the Council, to treat of affairs of state.

[2] The meaning is, The Queen's prime minister might easily be seen to be Disdain, because of the excessive haughtiness of her eye.

[3] It appears to have been the fashion for ladies at this period to wear their hair plaited or tressed, and hanging down behind. In *The Knightes Tale*, Emily is thus described:—

'Hire yolwe heer was browdid in a tresse
Byhynde hire bak, a yerde long I gesse.'—Vol. i. p. 122.

[4] This is a French idiom, en muet, like one mute or dumb.

No respect having what was best to doon,
Till right anon, beholding here and there,
I spied a friend of mine, and that full soon,
A gentlewoman,[1] was the chamberere
Unto the queen, that hote, as ye shall here,
Philobone,[2] that loved [wel] al her life:
Whan she me sey, she led me forth as blife;

And me demanded how and in what wise
I thither came, and what my errand was?
'To seen the court,' quoth I, 'and all the guise;
And eke to sue for pardon and for grace,
And mercy aske for al my grete trespace,
That I none erst come to the Court of Love:
Foryeve me this, ye goddes all above.'

'That is wel said,' quoth Philobone, 'indede:
But were ye not assomoned to appere
By Mercurius, for that is al my drede:'
'Yes,[3] gentil fair,' quoth I, 'now am I here,
Ye, yet what tho, though that be true, my dere?'
'Of your free will ye should have come unsent:
For ye did not, I deme ye will be shent.

'For ye that reign in youth and lustinesse,
Pampered with ease, and jealous in your age,
Your duty is, as ferre as I can guesse,
To Loves Court to dressen your viage,
As soon as Nature maketh you so sage,
That ye may know a woman from a swan,[4]
Or whan your foot is growen halfe a span.

---

[1] The construction is, A gentlewoman *who* was the chamberere.

[2] This name, an unhappy composite of Greek and Latin, means a lover of that which is good.

[3] See vol. ii. p. 249, note 1.

[4] An allusion to the monkish story of the man who brought up a youth ignorant of women, and who, when he first saw them, told him they were geese. The story is in the *Promptuarium Exemplorum*. It was adopted by Bocaccio, from whom it was taken by Lafontaine, liv. iii. conte 1. See *Latin Stories*, edited by Mr. Wright.

'But sith that ye, by wilful negligence,
This eightene yere hath kept yourself at large,
The greater is your trespasse and offence,
And in your neck you mote bere al the charge:
For better were ye ben withouten barge
Amid the sea in tempest and in rain,
Than biden here, receiving woe and pain,

'That ordained is for such as them absente
Fro Loves Court by yeres longe and fele.
I ley my life ye shalle ful soon repente;
For Love will rive your colour, lust, and hele:
Eke ye must bait[1] on many an hevy mele:
No force, ywis, I stirred you long agone
To draw to court,' quoth little Philobone.

'Ye shall wel see how rough and angry face
The King of Love will show, whan ye him se:
By mine advice kneel down and ask him grace,
Eschewing peril and adversite;
For well I wot it wol none other be,
Comfort is none, ne counsel to your ese;
Why wille ye than the King of Love displese?'

'O mercy God,' quoth iche,[2] 'I me repent,
Caitif and wretch in herte, in wille and thought!'
And after this shall be mine whole intent
To serve and plese, how dere that love be bought:[3]
Yet sith I have mine own penaunce ysought,
With humble spirite shal I it receive,
Though that the King of Love my life bereve.

'And though that fervent loves qualite
In me did never worke truly, yet I
With al obeisaunce and humilite,

[1] This word, meaning to feed, is now only applied to horses.

[2] Ich, the Saxon form of I, is here used apparently to avoid the awkwardness of the two letters *I* coming together.

[3] However dear love may be bought, however much I may suffer by loving. Serve and please appear to be taken absolutely.

And benign herte, shall serve him til I die:
And he that Lord of might is, grete and highe,
Right as him list me chastise and correcte,
And punishe me, with trespasse thus infecte.'[1]

These wordes saide, she caught me by the lap,
And led me forth intil a temple round,[2]
Both large and wide: and as my blessed hap
And good aventure was, right soon I found
A tabernacle[3] raised from the ground,
Where Venus sat, and Cupide by her side,
Yet half for drede I gan my visage hide.

And eft again I looked and behelde,
Seeing ful sundry people in the place,
And mistere folk, and some that might not welde
Their limbes well,[4] me thought a wonder case;
The temple shone with windows al of glasse,[5]

---

[1] Thus infected with trespass or sin. This is another example of the manner in which the terms of theology are in this poem applied to the allegorical philosophy upon which it is founded.

[2] In this age of symbolism the poet doubtless intended to convey a lesson in every circumstance of his symbolical picture, and therefore in the circular shape of the Temple of Love. To understand this we must remember that the oblong shape and eastward direction of Christian churches to the mediæval mind symbolized the fact that Christian worship was directed to the God-Man Jesus Christ, who died and was buried at Jerusalem. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre alone was round (except those built expressly to imitate it, like the Temple Church in London), because it pointed to nothing, being on the very site of the Holy Sepulchre itself. The Temple of Love is therefore round, because it points to no historical fact or locality, but represents the worship of Venus and Cupid, who are bodily present in the midst of it.

[3] A tabernacle is properly a tent or booth; but it is applied, in architecture, to a pointed canopy of stone, supported on pillars, and arched and enriched with crockets and other ornaments, for a statue to stand in.

[4] The meaning is, I thought it a wondrous case to see folks who could not wield, or govern, or use their limbs, come to worship the god of love. Mistere folk appears to mean folks of mysteries, or trades.

[5] The narrow slits which served for windows in the castles and churches of the Norman and early pointed period were probably closed with wooden shutters only, and were left entirely open to the air when light was required. The vastly increased size of the windows

Bright as the day, with many a fair image;
And there I see the fresh quene of Carthage,

Dido, that brent her beauty[1] for the love
Of false Eneas; and the waimenting
Of her Annelida, true as turtle dove,
To Arcite[2] fals: and there was in peinting
Of many a prince, and many a doughty king,
Whose martyrdom[3] was shewed about the walles;
And how that fele for love had suffered false.

But sore I was abashed and astonied
Of all tho folk that there were in that tide;
And than I askeden where they had woned:
'In divers courtes,' quoth she, 'here beside.'
In sundry clothing, mantle-wise full wide,
They were arrayed, and did their sacrifice
Unto the god, and goddess in their guise.

'Lo! yonder folk,' quoth she, 'that kneele in blew,[4]
They weare the colour aye and ever shalle,
In sign they ever were and wille be trew
Withouten chaunge: and soothly yonder all
That ben in black, and mourning crye and calle
Unto the goddes, for their loves bene
Some sick, some dede, some al to-sharp and kene.'

---

in Chaucer's time indicates that glass was beginning to be generally used. Even in dwelling-houses it appears also to have been often adorned with painting. Thus, in the book of the Duchess, describing his bed-chamber, he says:—

—— 'And with glass
Were all the windows well yglazed
Full clear, and not an hole ycrazed,
That to behold it was great joy:
For wholly all the story of Troy
Was in the glazing ywrought thus.'

[1] That burnt her beauty, meaning her beautiful self. See *Æneid.*

[2] See the poem of Chaucer entitled *Of Queen Annelida and false Arcite.*

[3] See *ante*, p. 134, note 5.

[4] Blue was the colour of truth.—See vol. ii. p. 223, note 3.

'Yea than,' quoth I, 'what done these prestes here,
Nunnes and hermits, freres, and alle tho
That sitte in white, in russet, and in grene?'[1]
'Forsooth,' quoth she, 'they wailen of their woe.'
'O mercy lord! may they so come and go
Freely to court and have such liberty?'
'Yea men of each condition and degre,

'And women eke: for truly there is none
Exception made, ne never was ne may:
This court is ope and free for everichone,
The King of Love he will not say them nay:
He taketh alle, in poor or rich array,
That meekly sue unto his excellence
With al their herte and al their reverence.'

And, walking thus about with Philobone,
I see where come a messenger in high
Straight from the king, which let commande anon,
Throughout the court to make an ho and cry:[2]
'Alle new come folk abide! and wote ye why?
The kinges lust is for to seen you soon:
Come near, let see! his wille mote need be done.'

Then gan I me presente tofore the king,
Trembling for fere, with visage pale of hew,
And many a lover with me was kneeling,
Abashed sore, till unto the time they knew
The sentence give of his intent ful trew:

---

[1] This line appears to be corrupt, for *grene* ought to rhyme with here; and though green was a colour sometimes used for ecclesiastical vestments, yet, being appropriated to particular services at certain seasons, it was not likely to be chosen to designate ecclesiastics generally. Being, however, the colour which denoted untruth (see vol. ii. p. 223, note 3), it may be supposed to allude to the unfaithfulness of these ecclesiastics to their religious vows.

[2] A hue and cry. Tyrwhitt derives this word from the barbarous Latin *hutesium*, translated outhees (see vol. i. p. 162, note 3). But in almost all languages, ancient and modern, the word for lamentation or outcry appears to take the same form by onomatopœia. Thus we have in Greek Οὐαί, in Latin Ululare, old French Harrou, and huer, to hoot, whence an owl is vulgarly called chat-huant; in English, to hoot, outcry, hue-and-cry; and in Irish, Hullaloo.

And at the last the king hath me behold
With stern visage, and said, 'What doth this old,

'Thus far ystope[1] in yeres, come so late
Unto the court?' 'Forsooth, my liege,' quoth I,
'An hundred time I have been at the gate
Afore this time, yet could I never espy
Of mine acquaintaunce any in mine ye;
And shamefastness away me gan to chace;
But now I me submit unto your grace.'

'Well! al is pardoned, with condicion
That thou be true from henceforth to thy might,
And serven Love in thine intencion:
Swere this, and than, as far as it is right,
Thou shalt have grace here in thy quenes sight.'
'Yes, by the faith I owe to your croun, I swere,
Though Death therefore me thirlith with his spere.'

And whan the king had seen us everychone,
He let commande an officer in high
To take our faith,[2] and shew us, one by one,
The statutes[3] of the court full busily:
Anon the boke was laid before their eye,
To rede and see what thing we must observe
In Loves Court, till that we die and sterve.

---

[1] Ystope appears to mean steeped, or perhaps stepped, advanced, though there seems little propriety in saying that a youth of eighteen is steeped or advanced in years. It may, however, be intended for a hyperbolical declaration of the pleasure of the King of Love that his votaries should worship him from their earliest years.

[2] That is, receive our homage, and administer the oath of fealty, a duty often performed by proxy. The ceremony of doing homage is preserved in the curious nursery game in which one sits down and another kneels before him, placing his hands with the palms joined together, between those of the first, who says—

'King, king I am,
I am your master, you are my man!
What service can you do me?'

The *man*, or vassal, makes a very impertinent reply, and a general combat ensues.

[3] In Speght's edition of Chaucer there is a poem entitled *The X. Commandments of Love.* It is rejected by Tyrwhitt as not genuine, and appears to be an imitation of this poem.

And for that I was lettered, there I red
The statutes whole of Loves Court and halle:
The first statute that on the boke was spred,
Was, To be true in thought and dedes alle
Unto the King of Love, the lord ryal;
And to the Quene, as faithful and as kind,
As I could thinke with herte, wil and mind.

The second statute, Secretly to kepe
Counsel of love, not blowing every where
Al that I know, and let it sink and flete;
It may not sown in every wightes ere:
Exiling slander aye for drede and fere,
And to my lady, which I love and serve,
Be true and kind, her grace for to deserve.

The third statute was clearly writ also,
Withouten chaunge to live and die the same,
None other love to take, for wele ne wo,
For blind delight, for ernest nor for game,
Without repent for laughing or for grame.
To biden still in full perseveraunce:
Al this was whole the kings ordinaunce.

The fourth statute, To purchase[1] ever to here,
And stirren folk to love, and beten fire
On Venus auter, here about and there,
And preche to them of love and hot desire,
And telle how love wil quiten wel their hire:
This must be kept; and loth me to displese:
If love be wroth, passe; for thereby is ese.

The fifth statute, Not to be daungerous,[2]
If that a thought would reve me of my slepe:
Nor of a sight be over squemous;[3]

[1] *Purchase* means here to acquire, or gain over proselytes.

[2] *Dangerous* appears to mean here, displeased, angry.

[3] *Squemous* or squaimous occurs before in *The Miller's Tale*, and Tyrwhitt says he does not understand it. The modern word squeamish is no doubt derived from it, but, like buxome and other words, it seems to have entirely changed its signification. The original mean-

And so verily this statute was to kepe,
To turne and wallowe in my bed and wepe,
Whan that my lady, of her cruelte,
Would from her herte exilen al pite.

The sixt statute, it was for me to use,
Alone to wandére, void of company,[1]
And on my ladys beauty for to muse,
And thinken it no force to live or die;
And eft again to thinke the remedy,
How to her grace I might anon attain,
And tell my woe unto my sovereine.

The seventh statute was, To be pacient,
Whether my lady joyful wǽre or wroth;
For wordes glad or heavy, diligent,
Whether that she me helden lefe or loth:
And hereupon I put was to mine oth,
Her for to serve, and lowly to obeye,
In shewing her my chere, yea, twenty sithe aday.

The eighth statute to my remembraunce,
Was, To speaken and praye my lady dere,
With hourly labour and great entendaunce,
Me for to love with al her herte entere,
And me desire and make me joyful chere,
Right as she is, surmounting every faire,
Of beauty wel[2] and gentil debonaire.[3]

---

ing, as here, appears to be desirous, in the sense of having a sickly longing.

[1] See *Romeo and Juliet*, Act i. sc. 1:—

'Madam, an hour before the worshipped sun
Peered forth the golden window of the east,
A troubled mind drave me to walk abroad;
Where—underneath the grove of sycamore,
That westward rooteth from the city's side—
So early walking did I see your son:
Towards him I made; but he was ware of me,
And stole into the covert of the wood.'

[2] The well, or spring, or fountain, of beauty.

[3] Many examples of the fashion of joining two adjectives instead of

The ninth statute, with letters writ of gold,
This was the sentence, How that I and alle
Should ever drede to be too overbold
Her to displese; and truly so I shalle;
But ben content for thinge that may falle,
And meekly take her chastisement and yerde,[1]
And to offend her ever ben aferde.

The tenth statute was Egally to discerne
Betwene the lady and thine abilite,
And thinke thyself art never like to yerne,
By right, her mercy nor her equite,
But of her grace and womanly pite:
For though thy self be noble in thy strene,[2]
A thousand fold more noble is thy quene.

Thy lives lady and thy sovereine,
That hath thine herte al whole in governaunce,
Thou mayst no wise it taken to disdaine,
To put thee humbly at her ordinaunce,
And give her free the rein of her plesaunce;
For liberty is thing that women looke,[3]
And truly els the matter is a crooke.

The eleventh statute, Thy signes for to knowe
With eye and finger, and with smiles soft,
And low to couch, and alway for to showe,
For drede of spies, for to winken ofte:
And secretly to bringe up a sigh alofte,

---

an adjective and a substantive, from which the euphuists of the Elizabethan era, and Shakespeare himself, extract so many quaint conceits, may be observed in this poem; as here, *gentil debonaire*; and afterwards, *false untrue, faithful true, goodly fresh*, &c.

[1] *Yerde* means simply a rod; also the cane with which a pedagogue punishes his pupils; hence, generally, an instrument of chastisement.

[2] *Strene* means strain or race, properly seed, from to straw, stra, or stre, to sow, a metaphor often used in Scripture, as in Gen. iii. 15, 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.' The seed of David, meaning his descendants.

[3] Liberty is a thing women desire to have; and if they have it not, things go crookedly.

But still beware of overmuch resort;
For that paraventure spileth all thy sport.

The twelfth statute remember to observe:
For al the pain thou hast for love and wo,
Al is too lite her mercy to deserve,
Thou musten think, wherever thou ride or go
And mortal woundes suffer thou also,
Al for her sake, and think it wel besette
Upon thy love, for it may not be bette.

The thirteenth statute, Whilome is to thinke,
What thing may best thy lady like and plese,
And in thine hertes bottom let it sinke:
Some thing devise, and take for it thine ese,
And send it her, that may her herte appese:
Some herte, or ring, or letter, or device,
Or precious stone; but spare not for no price.

The fourteenth statute eke thou shalt assaye
Firmly to keepe the most part of thy life:
Wish that thy lady in thine armes laye,
And nightly dreme, thou hast thy nightes wife
Sweetly in armes, straining her as blife:
And when thou seest it is but fantasy,
See that thou sing not over merrily,

For too much joy hath oft a woful end.
It longeth eke this statute for to holde,
To deme thy lady evermore thy friend,
And think thyself in no wise a cuckolde.[1]
In every thing she doth but as she sholde:
Construe the best, believe no tales newe,
For many a lie is told, that semeth ful trewe.

But think that she, so bounteous and faire,
Could not be false: imagine this algate;
And think that tongues wicked would her appaire,

[1] See *Frankelyn's Tale*, vol. ii. p. 238.

Slandering her name and worshipful estate,
And lovers true to setten at debate:
And though thou seest a fault right at thine ye,
Excuse it blive, and glose[1] it prettily.

The fifteenth statute, Use to swere and stare,
And counterfeit a lesing hardily,
To save thy ladys honour every where,
And put thyself for her to fighte boldly:
Say she is good, virtuous, and ghostly,[2]
Clear of intent, and herte, yea, thought and will;
And argue not for resone ne for skille

Against thy ladys pleasure ne intent:
For love wil not be countrepleted indede:
Say as she saith, then shalt thou not be shent,
The crow is white; yea truly, so I rede:
And aye what thing that she wil the forbede,
Eschew all that, and give her sovereintee,
Her appetite follow in al degre.

The sixteenth statute, keep it if thou may:—
Seven sithe at night thy lady for to plese,
And seven at midnight, seven at morrow day,
And drink a caudle early for thine ease.
Do this and keep thine hede from all disese,
And win the garland here of lovers alle,
That ever came in court, or ever shalle.

Ful few, think I, this statute holde and kepe;
But truly this my reson giveth me fele,
That some lovers should rather falle aslepe,
Than take on hand to plese so ofte and wele.
There lay none oth to this statute adele,
But kepe who might as gave him his corage:
Now get this garland lusty folke of age.

---

[1] Explain it away. Hence Glossary.
[2] Spiritual, or perhaps rather the French *spirituelle*.

Now win who may, ye lusty folke of youth,
This garland fresh, of floures rede and white,
Purple and blue, and coloures ful uncouth,
And I shal croune him king of al delight!
In al the court there was not, to my sight,
A lover true, that he ne was adrede,
When he expresse hath herd the statute rede.

The seventeenth statute, Whan age approacheth on,
And lust is laid, and all the fire is queint,
As freshly then thou shalt begin to fonne,
And dote in love, and al her image peint
In thy remembraunce, til thou begin to faint,
As in the first seson thine herte began:
And her desire, though thou ne may ne can

Perform thy living actuel, and lust;
Register this in thine remembraunce:
Eke when thou mayest not kepe thy thing from rust,
Yet speke and talk of pleasaunt dalliaunce;
For that shall make thine herte rejoice and daunce,
And whan thou mayest no more the game assay,
The statute bid thee pray for them that may.

The eighteenth statute, wholly to commende,
To plese thy lady, is, That thou eschewe
With sluttishness thyself for to offende;
Be jollife, fresh, and fete, with thinges newe,
Courtly with maner, this is al thy due,
Gentil of port, and loving cleanlinesse;
This is the thing that liketh thy mistresse.[1]

And not to wander lich a dulled ass,
Ragged and torn, disguised in array,
Ribald in speech, or out of mesure passe,
Thy bound exceeding; think on this alwaye:
For women ben of tender hertes aye,

[1] See vol. i. p. 132, note 2.

And lightly set their plesure in a place;
Whan they misthinke, they lightly let it passe.

The nineteenth statute, Mete and drinke forgete:
Ech other day, see that thou fast for love,[1]
For in the court they live withouten mete,
Save such as cometh from Venus al above;
They take none heed, in pain of great reprove,
Of mete and drinke, for that is all in vaine,
Only they live by sight of their sovereine.

The twentieth statute, last of everichone,
Enrol it in thine hertes privite;
To wringe and waile, to turne, and sighe and grone,
Whan that thy lady absent is from thee;
And eke renew the wordes alle that she
Between you twain hath said, and al the chere
That thee hath made thy lives lady dere.

And see thine herte in quiet ne in rest
Sojourne, till time thou seen thy lady eft;
But wher she wone by south, or east, or west,
With all thy force, now see it be not left:
Be diligent, till time thy life be reft,
In that thou mayest, thy lady for to see;
This statute was of old antiquite.

An officer of high authority,
Cleped Rigour,[2] made us to swere anon:
He nas corrupt with partiality,

[1] Thus St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1109, inveighing against the artifices of women to increase their personal attractions, says:—

'Altera jejunat misere, minuitque cruorem,
Et prorsus quare palleat ipsa facit,
Nam quæ non pallet sibi rustica quæque videtur,
Hic decet, hic color est verus amantis, ait.'

S. ANSELMUS, *De contemptu Mundi.*

[2] The officer who swears the liege-men of the King of Love is called Rigour, to denote the strictness of the obedience required of his subjects.

Favour, prayer, ne gold that clerely shone;
'Ye shalle,' quoth he, 'now sweren here echone,
Younge and olde, to kepe, in that ye maye,
The statutes truly, all after this day.'

O God, thought I, hard is to make this oth!
But to my power shal I them observe;
In al this world nas matter half so lothe,
To swere for al; for though my body sterve,
I have no might them whole to observe.
But herken now the case how it befelle:
After my oth was made, the troth to telle,

I turned leaves, looking on this boke,
Where other statutes were of women shene;
And right forthwith Rigour on me gan loke
Full angerly, and said unto the quene
I traitour was, and charged me let been:[1]
'There may no man,' quoth he, 'the statute know,
That longe to women, high degree ne low.

'In secret wise they kepten ben full close,
They sound echone to liberty, my frend;
Pleasaunt they be, and to their own purpose;
There wot no wight of them, but God and fiend,[2]
Ne maught shal wite, unto the worldes end.
The quene hath yeve me charge, in pain to die,
Never to rede ne seen them with mine ye.

'For men shall not so nere of counsel been,
With womanhede, ne knowen of her guise,
Ne what they think, ne of their wit thengine;
I me report to Salomon[3] the wise,
And mighty Sampson,[4] which beguiled thrice

[1] That is, charged me to let be, or leave off.

[2] Elle connait Dieu et le diable, is still a proverbial expression in France, meaning there is nothing she does not know.

[3] I refer, in proof of what I say, to Solomon the wise. The allusion is to Solomon's being inveigled by his idolatrous wives from the worship of the true God to that of idols. 1 Kings xi.

[4] Judges xvi.

With Dalida was; he wot that, in a throwe,
There may no man statute of women knowe.

'For it paraventure may right so befall,
That they be bound by nature to deceive,
And spinne, and wepe, and sugar strewe on galle,[1]
The herte of man to ravish and to reive,
And whet their tongue as sharp as swerd or gleve:
It may betide, this is their ordinaunce,
So must they lowly doon their observaunce,

'And keepe the statute yeven them of kind,[2]
Of such as love hath yeve them in their life.
Men may not wete why turneth every wind,
Nor waxen wise, nor ben inquisitife
To knowe secret of maid, widow, or wife;
For they their statutes have to them reserved,
And never man to know them hath deserved.[3]

'Now dress you forth, the God of Love you guide!'
Quoth Rigour than, 'and seek the temple bright
Of Citherea goddess, here beside;
Beseechen her, by influence and might
Of al her vertue, you to teche aright,
How for to serve your ladies, and to plese,
Ye that ben sped,[4] and set your herte in ese.

---

[1] The allusion is to the proverb—

'Fallere, flere, nere, dedit Deus in muliere.'

See vol. ii. p. 56, note 2.

To strew sugar on gall means, of course, to regain the hearts of those they have injured by blandishments and flattery. This is the art which Proserpine, in *The Marchaund's Tale*, declares that she will teach all the daughters of Eve.—See vol. ii. p. 194.

[2] Of kind means by nature.

[3] *Deserved* seems here to have the sense of *meruit*, the theological word, meaning, *had the grace granted* them to do so and so. In the foregoing passage the poet displays his power of combining the bitterest irony and the deepest pathos. This rare combination frequently occurs in Shakespeare, of which remarkable examples are presented in the characters of *Lear* and *Hamlet*.

[4] You that are provided already with a lady.

'And ye that ben unpurveyed, praye her eke
Comfort you soon with grace and destine,
That ye may sette your herte there ye may like,
In such a place, that it to love may be
Honour and worship, and felicite
To you for aye. Now goeth by one assent.'
'Graunt mercy sir!' quoth we, and forth we went

Devoutly, soft and esy pace, to see
Venus,[1] the goddesse, image al of golde:
And there we found a thousand on their knee,
Some freshe and faire, some dedly to beholde,
In sundry mantles new, and some were olde
Some painted were with flames rede as fire,
Outward to show their inward hot desire:

With doleful chere, ful felle in their complaint,
Cried 'Lady Venus, rew upon our sore!
Receive our billes, with teres al bedreint;
We may not wepe, there is no more in store;
But wo and pain us fretteth more and more:
Thou blisful planet,[1] loveres sterre so shene,
Have routh on us, that sighe and careful bene;

'And punish, Lady, grievously, we praye,
The false untrue, with counterfeit pleasaunce,
That made their oth,[2] be true to live or deye,
With chere assured, and with countenaunce;
And falsely now they footen loves daunce,
Barren of routh, untrue of that they said,
Now that their lust and plesure is allayd.'

---

[1] This is an instance of the way in which astrology and the heathen idolatry were connected. In the middle ages the classical traditions had not yet entirely died away; and the popular astrology was nothing but a remnant of the old idolatry, which taught that the sun, moon, and stars were the outward and visible signs, as it were, of the gods, and that a person born when any particular planet was in a certain position in the heavens, was through life under the influence of the god whom that planet represented.—See vol. i. p. 151, note 3.

[2] Oath *to* be true. The preposition *to*, as well as the relative pronoun, is often understood.

Yet eft again, a thousand million,
Rejoysing, love, leading their life in blis:
They said:—'Venus, redresse[1] of al division,
Goddesse eternal, thy name yheried is!
By loves bond is knit al thing, ywis,
Beast unto beast, the earth to water wan,[2]
Bird unto bird, and woman unto man;[3]

'This is the life of joy that we ben in,
Resembling life of heavenly paradise;
Love is exiler aye of vice and sin;
Love maketh hertes lusty to devise;
Honour and grace, have they in every wise,
That ben to loves law obedient;[4]
Love maketh folk benigne and diligent;

---

[1] Redresse is elegantly put for redresser.

[2] Wan is an epithet applied to water in the ballad of Earl Richard in Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*, vol. iii.:—

'And they hae had him to the *wan* water,
For a' men call it Clyde.

The note says, *Clyde*, in Celtic, means *white*.

[3] This fine passage is taken from Boethius, whose philosophy appears to be the key of this allegorical poem:—

'Hanc rerum seriem ligat,
Tellus ac pelagus regens,
Et cœlo imperitans, amor.

* * * * *

Hic et conjugii sacrum
Castis nectit amoribus.
O felix hominum genus
Si vestros animos amor,
Quo cœlum regitur, regat.'

De Consol. Phil. ii., met. 8.

[4] Thus M. de Lalain, in giving his son Jacquet, then leaving home, to serve as page in the household of Philip of Burgundy, a parting exhortation to avoid the seven deadly sins, admonishes him under the head of le péché d'orgueil:—'Mais premièrement, sur tout rien, il vous convient de fuir le péché d'orgueil, si vous voulez venir à bien, et acquerir la grace de votre très désiré dame. Car sachez que peu de nobles hommes sont parvenus à la haute vertu de prouesse s'ils n'ont dame ou damoiselle de qui ils soient amoureuses.'—*Chroniques de J. de Lalain*, par Messire George Chastellan, ch. iv. There is, perhaps, more wisdom in this system of moral teaching than might at first sight be supposed. The intercourse of the sexes is the source of all

'Aye stering them to drede vice and shame:
In their degre it maketh them honourable;
And swete it is of love to bere the name,
So that his love be faithful, true and stable:
Love pruneth him, to semen amiable;
Love hath no fault, there it is exercised,
But sole with them that have al love despised.

'Honour to thee, celestial and clere
Goddess of love, and to thy celsitude,
That givest us light so far down from thy spere,
Piercing our hertes with thy pulcritude![1]
Comparison none of similitude
May to thy grace be made in no degre,
That hast us set with love in unite.

'Grete cause have we to praise thy name and thee,
For thurgh thee we live in joy and blisse.
Blessed be thou, most soverein to see!
Thy holy court of gladness may not misse:[2]
A thousand sithe we may rejoice in this,
That we ben thine with herte, and alle yfere
Enflamed with thy grace, and heavenly fere.'

Musing of tho that spaken in this wise,
I me bethought in my remembraunce
Mine orison right goodly to devise,
And pleasantly with hertes obeisaunce,
Beseech the goddesse voiden my grevaunce;[3]
For I loved eke, sauf that I wist not where;
Yet down I set and said as ye shalle here.

---

the social virtues; the family is the first, and most influential school for good or for evil; but in the family female influences reign supreme; and therefore it is that the station which women hold in the social scale is almost the test and criterion of civilization.

[1] Celsitude and pulchritude are examples of Latin words which have not held their place in our language.

[2] That is, Thy holy court may not fail to enjoy gladness.

[3] Which means, Beseech the goddess *to void*, or remove, my grievance.—See *ante*, p. 151, note *z*.

'Fairest of alle that ever were or be!
Liquor and light to pensife creature!
Mine whole affiaunce, and my lady free,
My goddess bright, my fortune and my ure,[1]
I yeve and yield my herte to the ful sure,
Humbly beseeching, lady, of thy grace
Me to bestowe now in some blessed place.

'And here I vowe me faithful, true, and kind,
Without offence of mutabilite,
Humbly to serve, while I have wit and mind,
Mine whole affiaunce, and my lady free!
In thilke place,[2] there ye me sign to be:
And, sith this thing of new is yeve me, aye
To love and serve, needly must I obeye.

'Be merciable with thy fire of grace,
And fix mine herte there[3] beauty is and routh;
For hote[4] I love, determine in no place,
Sauf only this, by God and by my trouth,
Troubled I was with slumber, sleep, and slouth
This other night, and in a visioun
I see a woman romen up and doun,

'Of mene stature,[5] and seemly to beholde,
Lusty and fresh, demure of countenaunce,
Yong and well shape, with here shene[6] as golde,
With eyen as crystal, farced with plesaunce;
And she gan stirre mine herte a lite to daunce;
But suddenly she vanishe gan right there:
Thus I may saye, I love and wot not where.

---

[1] The word *ure*, from the Latin *usura*, is a term in law, as when a statute is said to be put in ure from a certain day, meaning in force. But Mr. Thomas, the compiler of Urry's Glossary, suggests that, as here applied, it is from the French *heur*, hap, chance, fortune, as in *bonheur*, *malheur*. Thus, at p. 162, My destiny, my fate, and *hour* I bliss.

[2] Towards that lady to whom you assign me.

[3] *There* is, of course, equivalent to our *where*.

[4] That is, I love hotly, but my love is not determined to any particular object.

[5] Of middle stature.

[6] With hair shining like gold.

For what she is, ne her dwelling I not,
And yet I feel that love distreineth me:
Might ich[1] her know, her would I fain, God wot,
Serve and obeye with al benignite.
And if that other be my destine,
So that no wise I shall her never see,
Than graunt me her that best may liken me.

'With glad rejoyce to live in parfite hele,
Devoid of wrath, repent, or variaunce;
And able me to do that may be wele
Unto my lady, with hertes high pleasaunce:
And, mighty Goddess! thurgh thy purveyaunce
My wit, my thought, my lust and love so guide,
That to thine honour I may me provide

'To set mine herte in place there I may like,
And gladly serve with all affecciouu.
Grete is the pain which at mine herte doth stick,
Till I be sped by thine elecciouu:
Help, lady Goddess! that possessiouu
I might of her have, that in al my life
I clepen shal my quene and hertes wife.

'And in the Court of Love to dwelle for aye
My wille it is, and done thee sacrifice:
Daily with Diane[2] eke to fighte and fraye,
And holden werre, as might wil me suffice:
That goddesse chaste I keepen in no wise
To serve; a fig for all her chastity!
Her law is for religiousity.'[3]

And thus gan finish prayer, laud, and praise,
Which that I yeve to Venus on my knee,
And in mine herte to ponder and to peise[4]

[1] The old form *ich* is used before the letter *h*—see *ante*, p. 137, note 2—just as *an*, the old form of the indefinite article (German *ein*) is still used under similar circumstances.

[2] See vol. i. p. 161, three last from the bottom of the page.

[3] Her law is for religious persons, that is, persons living under a religious rule. Religion means properly *rule*, from religare, to bind.

[4] The construction of this sentence is somewhat obscure. *I* appears

I yeve anon her image fresh beaute:[1]
Heile to that figure sweet! and heile to thee,
Cupid,' quoth I, and rose and yede my way,
And in the temple as I yede, I sey

A shrine[2] surmounting al in stones rich,
Of which the force[3] was pleasaunce to mine eye,
With diamond or sapphire, never lich
I have none seen, ne wrought so wonderly.
So when I met with Philobone in high,
I gan demaunde, 'Who is this sepulture?'
'Forsooth,' quoth she, 'a tender creature

'Is shrined there, and Pite is her name.
She saw an eagle wreke him on a fly,
And pluck his wing, and eke him, in his game,[4]
And tender herte of that hath made her die:
Eke she would wepe, and mourne right piteously
To seen a lover suffere grete distresse.
In al the court nas none, as I do guesse,

'That could a lover half so wel availe,
Ne of his wo the torment or the rage
Aslaken,[5] for he was sure, withouten faile,
That of his grief she could the hete assuage.
In stede of Pite, speedeth hot corage
The matters alle of court, now she is dede;
I me report in this to womanhede.[6]

---

to be understood before *gan*, upon which depend the infinitive moods to ponder and to peise; as thus: I began to finish prayer, &c., and to ponder, &c.

[1] That is, I ascribed to her image fresh beauty, as an act of worship.

[2] A shrine like that in which relics were placed.

[3] *Force* seems here to mean abundance, as in old French. The same idiom prevails in Latin, *vis* often meaning *copia*.

[4] This sentence seems to mean that Pity saw the eagle avenge him on a fly, and pluck his (the fly's) wing, and eke (also) him, that is the fly himself, in his game, for sport. Perhaps the true reading for eke is *ete* (eat).

[5] The reading of Speght and his successors is *Asken*, evidently a contraction or error for *aslaken*, to slack or assuage, which has been here substituted.

[6] I refer, in proof of what I say, to the conduct of women.

'For waile and wepe, and crye, and speke, and praye,—
Women would not have pite on thy plaint;
Ne by that mene to ese thine herte conveye,
But thee receiven for their own talent:[1]
And say that Pite causeth thee, in consent
Of routh, to take thy service and thy paine
In that thou mayst, to plese thy sovereine.

'But this is counsel, keep it secretly,'
Quoth she 'I nold for all the world about,
The Quene of Love it wist; and wite ye why?
For if by me this matter springen out,
In court no lenger should I, out of doubt,
Dwellen, but shame in al my life endry:
Now kepe it close,' quoth she, 'this hardily.

'Wel, al is wel! Now shall ye sene,' she said,
'The fairest lady under sun that is:
Come on with me, demene you lich a maid,
With shamefast drede, for ye shall speake, ywis,
With her that is the mirrour joy and blis:[2]
But somewhat straunge and sad of her demene
She is, beware your countenaunce be seen,

'Nor over light, ne rechelesse, ne too bolde,
Ne malapert, ne running with your tongue;
For she will you obeisen and beholde,
And you demaunde why ye were hence so long
Out of this court, without resort among:
And Rosial[3] her name is hote aright,
Whose herte as yet is yeven to no wight.

'And ye also ben, as I understond,
With love but light avaunced, by your word;
Might ye by hap your freedom maken bond,

[1] The meaning appears to be, Women would not now have pity on you for your wailing and weeping, but would take your service as their due, and would say that in doing so you were only serving Pity, your sovereign.

[2] That is, the mirror of joy and bliss.

[3] This name is symbolical, the rose being the emblem, in every age, of all that is 'sweet and fair.'

And falle in grace with her, and wel accorde,
Well might ye thank the God of Love and Lord;
For she that ye saw in your dreme appere,
To love such one, what are ye then the nerre?[1]

'Yet wot ye what? as my remembraunce
Me yeveth now, ye feigne where that ye saye,
That ye with love had never acquaintaunce,
Save in your dreme right late this other daye:
Why, yes, parde! my life, that durst I laye,
That ye were caught upon an heath,[2] whan I
Saw you complaine, and sighe full pitously.

'Within an herber, and a garden fair
Where floures growe, and herbes vertuous,
Of which the savour sweet was and the air,
There were your self ful hot and amorous:
Ywis ye ben too nice and daungerous;
I would ye now repente,[3] and love some new:'—
'Nay by my truth,' I said, 'I never knew

'The goodly wight, whose I shal be for aye:
Guide me the Lord that love hath made and me.'
But forth we wente into a chamber gay,
There was Rosial, womanly to see,
Whose stremes, sotel-persing of her ye,[4]
Mine herte gan thrille for beaute in the stound:
'Alas,' quoth I, 'who hath me yeve this wound?'

And than I drad to speak, till at the last
I gret the lady reverently and wele;
Whan that my sigh was gone and overpast,

[1] The direct construction of the sentence would be, For how are you the nearer loving such an one as her whom you saw in your dream.

[2] There appears to be here an allusion to some circumstance of which we have no record.

[3] That is, I would *that you would* now repent.

[4] This is a curious idiom. *Streames* governs two genitives, *whose* and *of her eye*. The ordinary construction would be, The subtly piercing streams of whose eye. Streams means streams of light. *Sotel-persing* is also elegantly put for *subtly-piercing*.

Than down on knees ful humbly gan I knele,
Beseeching her my fervent wo to kele,
For there I took ful purpose in my minde,
Unto her grace my painful herte to binde.

"For if I shal al fully her descrive,
Her hede was round, by compas of nature,
Her here as gold,—she passed all on live,—
And lily forchede had this creature,
With liveliche browes, flaw, of colour pure,
Betwene the which was mene disseveraunce
From every brow, to shew a due distaunce.

Her nose directed straight, and even as line,
With form and shape thereto convenient,
In which the goddes milk-white path[1] doth shine;
And eke her eyen ben bright and orient
As is the smaragde,[2] unto my judgement,
Or yet these sterres heavenly, smale and brighte;
Her visage is of lovely rede and white.

Her mouth is short, and shut in little space,
Flaming somedele, not over red, I mene,
With pregnant lippes, and thicke to kisse, percase;
(For lippes thin, not fat, but ever lene,
They serve of naught, they be not worth a bene;
For if the basse ben full, there is delight,
Maximian[3] trewely thus doth he write.)

---

[1] The milky way, or galaxy.

[2] The *smaragde* is the emerald. Light green eyes would certainly not be beautiful; but the colour which in eyes is called black, may be observed to have a tinge of green. Thus in the drama of *Li jus Adan* by Adam de la Halle, a poet of the thirteenth century, already quoted—

'Si noir œil me sanlerent vais (verts).'

And again, in the *Roman de Fierabras*:—

'Les *ex vairs* et rians plus d'un faucon mué.'

Dante also speaks in commendation of *occhi verdi*.

[3] Cornelius Maximianus Gallus was an Etruscan by birth, and flourished in the reign of the Emperor Anastasius. Io. Alb. Fabric.,

But to my purpose:—I say, white as snow
Ben all her teeth, and in order they stond
Of one stature; and eke her breath, I trow,
Surmounteth alle odours that ever I found
In swetenes; and her body, face, and hond
Ben sharply slender, so that from the hede
Unto the foot, all is but womanhede.[1]

I hold my peace of other thinges hidde:—
Here shal my soul, and not my tongue, bewraye:—
But how she was arrayed, if ye me bidde,
That shal I wel discovere you and saye:
A bend of gold and silk, ful fresh and gaye,
With here in tresse,[2] ybroudered ful wele,
Right smoothly kempt,[3] and shining every dele.

About her neck a floure of fresh devise
With rubies set, that lusty were to sene;
And she in gown was, light and summer-wise,
Shapen ful wel, the colour was of grene,
With aureat seint[4] about her sides clene,
With divers stones, precious and rich:—
Thus was she rayed, yet saw I never her lich.

---

in *Biblioth. Lat.* The *dictum* about the lips is to be found in the first of the six elegies of his which remain. It is—

'Flammea dilexi, modicumque tumentia labra,
Quæ mihi gustanti basia plena darent.'

[1] The word *hede*, found only in composition, and meaning *the condition of*, is equivalent to our *hood*. Thus *likelihede* becomes likelihood; *falsehede*, falsehood; *womanhede*, womanhood. It seems sometimes to convey some idea of perfection, as here, 'All from her head to her foot was such as belonged to the perfection of woman's nature.'

[2] The printed copies read *With her intresse*, which is evidently corrupt. Thomas supposes it to be intended for *With here in tresse*, i. e., with hair plaited in tresses, which, being clearly sustained by the context, is here adopted.

[3] The printed copies read *kept*, obviously an error for kempt.

[4] The printed copies read *sent*, which means of course *ceinture* or girdle; but, as the word is ambiguous, the spelling used where the word occurs in *The Canterbury Tales* (see vol. i. p. 202) has been adopted in the text.

For if that Jove had but this lady sein,
Tho Calixto[1] ne yet Alcmenia,[2]
They never hadden in his armes lein;
Ne he had loved the faire Europa;[3]
Yea, ne yet Dané[4] ne Antiopa![5]
For al their beaute stood in Rosial;
She seemed lich a thing celestial

In bounte, favour, port, and semeliness
Pleasaunt of figure, mirrour of delight,
Gracious to seen, and root of al gentilnes,
With angel visage, lusty red and white:
There was not lack, sauf danger had a lite
This goodly fresh[6] in rule and governaunce;
And somdele straunge she was for her pleasaunce.

And truly soon I took my leve and went,
Whan she had me enquired what I was;
For more and more impressen gan the dent
Of Loves dart, while I beheld her face;
And eft again I cam to seken grace,
And up I put my bille, with sentence clere
That folweth after; rede and ye shalle here.

---

[1] Calisto, one of the nymphs attendant on Diana, was beloved by Jupiter. Juno, in jealousy, changed her into a bear; but Jupiter raised her to heaven, where she is known as the constellation Ursa Major.—Ovid, *Metamorph.* ii.

[2] Alcmena, the wife of Amphitryon, but beloved by Jupiter, who assumed her husband's shape in order to enjoy her company. The ludicrous imbroglio which ensues when the real Amphitryon returns and finds his place occupied by a second self, forms the plot of one of the wittiest of the plays of Plautus. In Molière's version of this play occurs the well-known speech, 'Le *véritable* Amphitryon est celui chez qui l'on dine.'

[3] Whom Jupiter, in the form of a bull, carried off to Crete.

[4] Danae, to whom Jupiter introduced himself in the form of a shower of gold.—Ovid, *Met.* iv.

[5] Antiope was beloved by Jupiter, who assumed the form of a satyr to obtain access to her.—Ovid, *Met.* vi.

[6] See next page, note 1.

'O ye fresh,[1] of beaute the root,
That nature hath formed so wel and made
Princesse and Quene! and ye that may do boot
Of al my languor with your wordes glad!
Ye woundede me, ye made me wo bestad;
Of grace redress my mortal grief, as ye
Of al my harm the very causer be.

'Now am I caught, and unware suddenly,
With persaunt stremes of your eye so clere,
Subject to been, and serven you mekely,
And al your man,[2] ywis, my lady dere,
Abiding grace, of which I you requere,
That merciles ye cause me not to sterve;
But guerdon me, lich as I may deserve.

'For, by my troth, alle the dayes of my breth
I am and wil be your[3] in wille and herte,
Pacient and meke, for you to suffere death
If it require; now rew upon my smerte;
And this I swere, I never shal out sterte
From Loves Court for none adversite,
So ye would rew on my distres and me.

'My destine, my fate, and hour,[4] I bliss,
That have me set to ben obediente
Only to you, the floure of all ywis:
I trust to Venus never to repente;
For ever ready, glad and diligent,
Ye shalle me finde in service to your grace,
Til death my life out of my body race.[5]

'Humble unto your excellence so digne,
Enforcing aye my wittes and my delight
To serve and plese with glad herte and benigne,

---

[1] Fresh, an adjective, is here taken as a substantive, a form very generally used by the euphuists of the time of Elizabeth.
[2] Your vassal.
[3] Your is here used for yours.
[4] See *ante*, p. 154, note 1.
[5] Race is from *arracher*, to tear.

And ben as Troylus,[1] Troyes knight,
Or Antony for Cleopatra bright,
And never you me thinkes to renaye:
This shal I keep unto mine ending daye.

'Imprint my speech in your memorial
Sadly,[2] my princesse, salve of al my sore!
And think that, for I would becommen thral,
And ben your own, as I have sayd before,
Ye muste of pity cherishe more and more
Your man, and tendere after his desert,
And give him corage for to ben expert.

'For where that one hath set his herte on fire,
And findeth neither refute ne pleasaunce,
Ne word of comfort, death wil quite his hire.
Alas! that there is none allegeaunce[3]
Of all their wo! alas, the great grievaunce
To love unloved! But ye, my Lady dere,
In other wise may governe this matere.'

'Truly gramercy, frend; of your good wille,
And of your proffer in your humble wise!
But for your service, take and kepe it stille.
And where ye say, I ought you wel cherise,
And of your grief the remedy devise,
I know not why: I nam acquainted welle
With you, ne wot not sothely where ye dwelle.'

'In art of love I write, and songes make,
That may be sunge in honour of the King
And Quene of Love; and than I undertake,
He that is sad shal than ful merry singe.
And daungerous[4] not ben in every thing

[1] Troilus, a son of Priam, whose love of Cressida forms the subject of one of Chaucer's longest poems.
[2] Seriously.
[3] *Allegiance* here means *allay*, *i. e.*, something to allay.
[4] Difficult to entreat, inexorable.

Beseche I you, but seen my wil and rede,[1]
And let your answer put me out of drede.'

'What is your name? rehearse it here I praye,
Of whence and where, of what condicion
That ye ben of? Let see, come off and saye!
Fain would I knowe your disposicion:—
Ye have put on your old intencion;
But what ye mene to serve me I ne wot,
Sauf that ye say ye love me wonder hote.'

'My name? alas, my herte, why makes thou straunge?
Philogenet I called am fer and nere,
Of Cambridge clerk, that never think to chaunge
Fro you that with your heavenly stremes clere
Ravish mine herte and ghost and al infere:
Since at the first I write my bille for grace,
Me think I see some mercy in your face.

'And what I mene, by gods that al hath wrought,
My bill now maketh final mencion,
That ye ben lady in my inward thought
Of all mine herte without offencion,
That I best love, and sithe I begun
To draw to court. Lo then! what might I say?
I yield me here unto your nobley.

'And if that I offend, or wilfully
By pomp of herte your precept disobeye,
Or done against your will unskilfully,
Or grieven you for ernest or for pleye,
Correct ye me right sharpely than I preye,
As it is seen unto your womanhede,[2]
And rew on me, or else I nam but dede.'

---

[1] That is, I beseech you only *to* see and read my will, that is, what I wish.

[2] As it seems good to your womanhood. He says, 'to your womanhede' rather than 'to you,' meaning 'to your womanly pity.'

'Nay, God forbid to feffe[1] you so with grace,
And for a word of sugared eloquence,
To have compassion in so little space!
Than were it time that some of us were hence!
Ye shall not find in me such insolence.
'Eye? what is this? may we not suffer sight?
How may ye loke upon the candle light,

'That clerer is and hotter than my ye?
And yet ye said the bemes perse and frete:—
How shal ye than the candle light endrye?
For wel wot ye, that hath the sharper hete.
And there ye bid me you correct and bete,
If ye offend,—nay, that may not be done:
There come but few that speeden here so soon.

'Withdrawe your ye, withdrawe from presence eek:
Hurt not yourself, through folly, with a loke;
I would be sorry so to make you sicke!
A woman should beware eek whom she toke:
Ye beth a clerk:—go serchen wel my boke,
If any women ben so light to winne:
Nay, bide a while, though ye were alle my kinne.[2]

'So soon ye may not win mine herte, in truth
The guise of court wil seen your stedfastness,
And as you done, to have upon you routh.
Your own desert, and lowly gentilnes,
That will rewarde you joy for heavines;
And tho ye waxen pale, and grene and dede
Ye muste it use a while, withouten drede,

'And it accepte and grutchen in no wise;[3]
But where as ye me hertily desire
To lene to love, me think ye be not wise.
Cease of your language! cease I you require!
For he that hath this twenty yere been here

[1] *To feffe* means to enfeoff, to put you in possession in fee simple.
[2] That is, You must wait, though you were my blood-relation.
[3] See statute vii., *ante*, p. 143.

May not obteyne; then marvaill I that ye
Be now so bold, of love to trete with me.'

'Ah! mercy, herte, my lady and my love,
My rightwise princesse and my lives guide!
Now may I pleyne to Venus all above,
That ruthlesse ye me gave this wound so wide!
What have I done? why may it not betide,
That for my truth I may received be?
Alas! than your daunger and your cruelte!

'In woful hour I got was, welaway!
In woful hour yfostred and yfed,
In woful hour yborn, that I ne may
My supplicacion sweetly have ysped!
The frosty grave and cold must be my bedde,
Without ye list your grace and mercy shewe,
Deth with his axe so fast on me doth hewe.

'So great disese and in so little while,
So little joy that felt I never yet;
And at my wo Fortune ginneth to smile,
That never erst I felt so hard a fit:
Confounden ben my spirits and my wit,
Till that my lady take me to her cure,
Which I love best of erthly creature.

'But that I like, that may I not come by;
Of that I pleyne, that have I abondaunce;
Sorrow and thought, they sitte me wonder nigh;
Me is withhold that might be my pleasaunce:
Yet turn again, my worldly suffisaunce!
O lady bright! and save your faithful trewe,[1]
And or I die yet ones upon me rewe.'

With that I fel in swound[2] and dede as stone,
With colour slain and wan as asshe pale;
And by the hand she caught me up anon,

[1] See *ante*, p. 162, note 1.

[2] The printed copies read *sound*, which is evidently a mistake for *swound* or swoon.

'Arise,' quoth she, 'what? have ye drunken dwale?
Why slepen ye? it is no nightertale.'
'Now mercy sweet,' quoth I, ywis afraied:
'What thing,' quoth she, 'hath made you so dismayed?

'Now wot I wel that ye a lover be,
Your hew is witnes in this thinge,' she said:
'If ye were secret, ye might knowe,' quoth she,
'Curteis and kind, all this should be allayed:
And now, mine herte! al that I have missaid,
I shal amende and sette your herte in ese.'
'That word it is,' quoth I, 'that doth me plese.'

'But this I charge, that ye the statutes[1] kepe,
And breke them not for sloth nor ignoraunce.'
With that she gan to smile and laughen depe,
'Ywis,' quoth I, 'I wil do your pleasaunce,
The sixteenth statute doth me grete grievaunce.
But ye must that relese or modify.'
'I graunt,' quoth she, 'and so I wil trewely.'

And softly than her colour gan appere,
As rose so red, throughout her visage alle,
Wherefore me thinke it is according here,
That she of right be cleped Rosialle.
Thus have I won, with wordes grete and smalle,
Some goodly word of her that I love beste,
And trust she shal yet sette mine herte in reste.

'GOTH on,' she said to Philobone, 'and take
This man with you, and lede him all aboute
Within the court, and shew him, for my sake,
What loveres dwellè withinne, and alle the route
Of officers him shewe, for he is, out of doubte,
A straunger yet:'—'Come on,' quoth Philobone,
'Philogenet, with me now must ye gon.'

---

[1] The printed copies read *stent*, probably a mistake or contraction for *statutes*.

And stalking softe with esy pace, I saw,
About the king standen al enviroun,
Attendaunce, Diligence, and their felaw
Furtherer, Esperaunce,[1] and many one;
Dread-to-offend there stood, and not alone;
For there was eek the cruel adversair,
The loveres foe, that cleped is Despair;

Which unto me spak angrily and felle,
And said, my lady me deceive shalle:
'Trowest thou,' quoth she, 'that alle she did telle,
Is true? Nay, nay, but under hony galle.
Thy birth and hers they be nothing egale:
Cast off thine herte,[2] for all her wordes white,
For in good faith she loveth the but a lite.

'And eek remember, thine abilite
May not compare with her, this well thou wote.'
Yea, then cam Hope and said, "My frend let be!
Believe him not: Despair he ginneth doute.'
'Alas,' quoth I, 'here is both cold and hot:
The tone me biddeth love, the tother nay,
Thus wot I not what me is best to saye.

'But wel wot I, my lady graunted me,
Truly to be my woundes remedye;
Her gentilnes may not infected be
With doublenes, thus trust I til I die.'
So cast I to voide Despaires companye,[3]
And taken Hope to counsel and to frend.
'Yea, keep that wel,' quoth Philobone, 'in mind.'

And there beside, within a bay window,
Stood one in grene, ful large of brede and length,
His beard as black as feathers of the crow;

---

[1] Esperance, or hope.

[2] Herte here means confidence or courage. Despair says, 'Cast off, lay aside your confidence.'

[3] That is, I cast about, or contrived, how I might avoid Despair's company.

His name was Lust, of wonder might and strength;
And with Delight to argue there he thenkth,
For this was alle his opinion,
That love was sinne: and so he hath begun

Tò resone fast, and ledge auctorite:[1]
'Nay,' quoth Delight, 'love is a virtue clere,
And from the soul his progres holdeth he:
Blind apetite of lust doth often stere,
And that is sinne: for reson lacketh there,
For thou dost think thy neighboures wife to winne:
Yet think it wel that love may not be sinne;

'For God, and saint, they love right verily,
Void of al sinne and vice: this knowe I wele,
Affeccion of flesh is sinne trewely;
But very love is virtue, as I fele,
For love may thy frail desire akele:[2]
For very love is love withouten sinne.' [a pinne.'
'Now stint,' quoth Lust, 'thou speketh not worth

And there I left them in their arguing,
Roming further in the castel wide,
And in a corner Liar stood talking
Of lesinges faste, with Flattery there beside;
He said that woman ware[3] attire of pride,
And men were founde of nature variaunt,
And coulde be false and shewen beau semblaunt.

Then Flattery bespak and said, ywis:
'See, so she goeth on pattenes faire and fete,
It doth right wel: what prety man is this
That rometh here? now truly drink ne mete
Nede I not have, mine herte for joye doth bete

[1] Alledge proofs, quote examples.

[2] This noble vindication of love is sufficient to cover a multitude of offences against mere verbal indelicacy, and may be admitted amongst the evidences in favour of the purity of sentiment claimed by some writers for *The Court of Love*.

[3] The printed editions read *were*, which is liable to be misunderstood.

Him to beholde, so is he goodly fresh:
It seemeth for love his herte is tender and neshe.'

This is the court of lusty folk and gladde,
And wel becometh their habit and arraye:
O why be some so sorry and so sadde,
Complaining thus in blacke and white and graye?
Freres they ben, and monkes, in good faye:
Alas, for routh! great dole it is to scen,
To see them thus bewaile and sorry been.

See how they cry and wring their handes white,
For they so soon went to religion![1]
And eke the nonnes with veile and wimple plight,
Their thought is, they ben in confusion:
'Alas,' they sain, 'we feigne perfeccion,[2]
In clothes wide, and lack our liberte;
But al the sin mot on our frendes be.

'For, Venus wot, we woulde as faine as ye,
That ben attired here and wel besene,
Desiren man and love in our degre,
Firm and faithful right as would the quene:
Our frendes wick, in tender youth and grene,
Against our wille made us religious;
That is the cause we mourne and wailen thus.'

---

[1] Because they so early bound themselves by religious vows.

[2] When the young man in the Gospel asked our Lord what he should do besides keeping the letter of the commandments to inherit eternal life, our Lord replied, 'If *thou wilt be perfect*, go sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and take up thy cross and follow me.' This, and some other passages of the same sort, called, technically, 'Counsels of perfection,' gave rise to a distinction between that obedience absolutely necessary for salvation, and a more perfect mode of life to which a very high reward was supposed to be annexed; and those who professed the state of voluntary poverty, virginity, obedience, &c., were said to follow 'perfection.' The nuns are here represented as having taken upon them these vows of perfection at the instigation of their friends, before they were of an age to know whether they had the grace to keep them or not; and as being therefore obliged to feign a virtue which they did not possess.

Than saide the monks and freres in the tide,
'Wel may we curse our abbeyes and our place,
Our statutes sharpe to singe in copes wide,[1]
Chastely to keepe us out of loves grace,
And nevere to fele comfort ne solace;
Yet suffere we the hete of loves fire,
And after some other happely we desire.

'O Fortune cursed, why now and wherefore
Hast thou,' they said, 'bereft us liberte,
Sith nature yave us instrument in store,
And appetite to love and lovers be?
Why mote we suffere such adversite,
Diane to serve, and Venus to refuse?
Ful often sithe these materes doth us muse.'[2]

'We serve and honoure, sore against our wille,
Of chastity the goddes and the quene;
Us leefer were with Venus biden stille,
And have reward for love, and subject been
Unto these women courtely, freshe, and shene.
Fortune, we curse thy wheel of variaunce!
There we were welle thou rievest our plesaunce.'

Thus leave I them, with voice of plaint and care,
In raging wo crying ful pitously;
And as I yede, ful naked and ful bare
Some I behold, looking dispitously
On poverty, that dedely cast their eye;
And 'Welaway!' they cried, and were not faine,
For they ne mighte their glad desire attaine.

For lacke of richesse worldely and of gode,
They banne and curse, and wepe, and sain, 'Alas,
That poverte hath us heut that whilom stode

[1] The cope was the cloak used in singing the divine office in the choir. It was worn by canons in the modern Anglican Church, till Warburton, then a canon of Durham, threw off his in disgust, because it disarranged his full-bottomed wig. Our bishops now wear purple copes at coronations.

[2] Full ofttimes these matters make us muse.

At hertes ese, and free and in gode case!
But now we dare not shewe our self in place,
Ne us embolde to dwell in company,
There as our herte wold love right faithfully.'

And yet againward shriked every nonne,
The pang of love so straineth them to crye:
'Now wo the time,' quoth they, 'that we be boun!
This hateful order nise[1] will done us die!
We sighe and sobbe, and bleden inwardly,
Fretting our self with thought and hard complaint,
That nigh for love we waxen wode and faint.'

And as I stode beholding here and there,
I was ware of a sort ful languishing,
Savage and wild of looking and of chere,
Their mantles and their clothes aye tering;
And oft they were of nature complaining,
For they their members lacked, foot and hand,
With visage wry, and blind, I understand.

They lacked shape, and beaute to preferre
Them self in love: and said that God and Kind
Hath forged them to worshippen the sterre,
Venus the bright, and leften all behind
His other werkes clene and out of mind:
'For other have their ful shape and beaute,
And we,' quoth they, 'ben in deformite.'

And nigh to them there was a company,
That have the susters werried and missaide,
I mene the three of fatal destiny,[2]
That be our werkers: suddenly abraide,
Out gan they cry as they had been afraide,
'We curse,' quoth they, 'that ever hath nature,
Yformed us this woful life to endure.'

---

[1] Nice seems here to mean precise.

[2] The Parcæ, or Fates, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who, in the heathen mythology, represented the idea of absolute decrees, to which even the gods were supposed to be subject.

And there eek was Contrite,[1] and gan repente,
Confessing whole the wound that Citheré
Hath with the dart of hot desire him sente,
And how that he to love must subject be:
Than held he alle his scornes vanite,
And said that loveres helde a blisful life,
Younge men and olde, and widow, maid and wife.

'Bereve me, Goddes,' quoth he, 'of thy might,
My scornes alle and scoffes, that I have
No power for to mocken any wight,[2]
That in thy service dwelle: for I did rave:
This know I wel right now, so God me save,
And I shal be the chief post[3] of thy faith,
And love upholde, the reverse who so saith.'

Dissemble stood not far from him in troth,
With party mantle,[4] party hood and hose;
And said he hadde upon his lady routh,
And thus he wound him in, and gan to glose
Of his intent ful double, I suppose:
In al the world he said he loved her wele;
But ay me thought he loved her nere a dele.

Eek Shamefastnes was there, as I took hede,
That blushed red, and durst not ben aknow
She lover was, for thereof had she drede;
She stood and hing her visage down alow;
But such a sight it was to sene, I trow,
As of these roses ruddy on their stalke:
There could no wight her spy to speke or talke

---

[1] *Contrite* is the personification of the character drawn by Shakespeare in Benedict.

[2] That is, That I may have no power to mock any one. Contrite says this in penitence of heart.

[3] Post here means pillar, in allusion to Gal. ii. 9, where St. Paul calls Peter and James and John 'pillars of the Church.'

[4] The party-coloured mantles denote their duplicity.

In loves art, so gan she to abashe,
Ne durst not uttere al her privite:
Many a stripe and many a grievous lashe
She gave to them that wolden loveres be,
And hindered sore the simple commonalty,
That in no wise durst grace and mercy crave,
For were not she,[1] they need but aske and have;

Where if they now approchen for to speke,
Then Shamefastnes returneth them again:
They thinke, if we our secret counsel breke,
Our ladies wille have scorn on us certain,
And paraventure thinken great disdain:
Thus Shamefastnes may bringen in despeire,
Whan she is dede the tother will be heire.

Come forth Avaunter![2] now I ring thy belle!
I spied him soon; to God I make avowe,
He looked black as fiendes doth in Helle:—
'The first,' quoth he, 'that ever I did wowe,
Within a word she came, I wot not howe,
So that in armes was my lady free,
And so hath ben a thousand mo than she.

'In England, Britain,[3] Spain, and Picardy,
Artois, and France, and up in high Hollande,
In Burgoyne, Naples, and Italy,
Navarre,[4] and Greece, and up in heathen lande,
Was never woman yet that wold withstande,
To ben at my commandment when I wold:
I lacked neither silver coin ne gold.

---

[1] That is, Were it not for her.

[2] The printed copies read *a vaunter*; evidently a mistake for *avaunter*, a boaster. Gower uses *avauntance* and *avauntarge* for boasting or bragging. There is something very spirited in Philobone calling out Avaunter to be seen and described. *Avow*, in the next line, is also one word.

[3] Meaning Bretagne, or Armorica.

[4] Naverne in the printed copies.

'And there I met with this estate and that;
And her I broched, her, and her, I trowe:
Lo! there goeth one of mine; and wot ye what?
Yon fresh attired have I laid ful lowe;
And such one yonder eke right wel I knowe:
I kept the statute whan we lay yfere;
And yet yon same hath made me right good chere.'

Thus hath Avaunter blowen every where
Al that he knoweth, and more a thousand folde;
His ancestry of kinne was to Liere,
For first he maketh promise for to holde
His ladies counsel, and it not unfolde;
Wherfore, the secret when he doth unshitte,
Then lieth he, that al the world may witte.

For falsing so his promise and beheste,
I wonder sore he hath such fantasie;
He lacketh wit, I trowe, or is a beste,
That can no bet himself with reason guie.
By mine advice, Love shal be contrarye
To his availe, and him eke dishonoure,
So that in court he shal no more sojoure.

'Take heed,' quoth she, this little Philobone,
'Where Envy rocketh in the corner yond,[1]
And sitteth dirke; and ye shalle see anon
His lene body, fading both face and hond,
Himself he fretteth,[2] as I understond,

[1] Envy is admirably represented as rocking himself to and fro with vexation, as he sits, dark, in a corner. The reader will observe the elegance of this expression. 'Sitteth, dark, in a corner,' is much more poetical than 'setteth in a dark corner.' It recals Milton's 'sings darkling.'

[2] This appears rather to allude to a passage in the Elegies of Ovid, lib. i. 15, 'Pascitur in vivis Livor.' But the description of Envy in general is not unlike that in *Metamorph.* lib. ii., 775:—

'Pallor in ore sedet: macies in corpore toto:
Nunquam recta acies; livent rubigine dentes.
* * * * * *
Vixque tenet lachrymas, quia nil lachrymabile cernit.'

Witnes of Ovid methamorphosose;
The loveres foe he is, I wil not glose.

'For where a lover thinketh him promote,
Envy will grutch, repining at his wele;
It swelleth sore about his hertes rote,
That in no wise he cannot live in hele;
And if the faithful to his lady stele,
Envy wil noise and ringe it round aboute,
And saye much worse than done is, out of doubte.'

And Privy Thought, rejoycing of him self,
Stood not ferre thence in habit marvellous;
'Yon is,' thought I, 'some spirit or some elf,
His subtil image is so curious:
How is,' quoth I, 'that he is shaded thus
With yonder cloth, I not of what colour?'
And nere I went and gan to lere and pore,

And framed him a question ful harde.
'What is,' quoth I, 'the thing thou lovest best?
Or what is boot unto thy paines harde?
Me think thou livest here in great unrest,
Thou wandrest aye from south to east and west,
And east to north; as fer as I can see,
There is no place in court may holden thee.

'Whom folwest thou? where is thy herte ysette?
But my demaund assoile I thee require.'
'Me thought,' quoth he, 'no creature may lette
Me to ben here, and where as I desire:
For where as absence hath done out the fire,
My merry thought it kindleth yet again,
That bodily me thinke with my sovereine

'I stand and speke, and laugh, and kisse, and halse,
So that my thought comforteth me ful oft:
I think, God wot, though al the world be false,
I wil be true; I think also how softe
My lady is in speech, and this on lofte

Bringeth mine herte with joy and grete gladnes;
This privy thought allayeth mine heaviness.

'And what I thinke or where to be, no man
In al this Earth can telle, ywis, but I:
And eke there nis no swallow swift, ne swan
So wight of wing, ne half so yerne can flye;
For I can been, and that right suddenly,
In Hevene, in Helle, in Paradise, and here,
And with my lady, whan I wil desire.

'I am of counsel fer and wide, I wot,
With lord and lady, and their privity
I wot it al; but be it cold or hot,
They shalle not speke without licence of me.
I mind, in such as seasonable be,
Tho[1] first the thing is thought within the herte,
Ere any word out from the mouth asterte.'

And with the word Thought bad farewel and yede:
Eek forth went I to sene the courtes guise,
And at the door came in, so God me spede,
Two courteours of age and of assise
Liche high, and broad, and, as I me advise,
The Golden Love, and Leaden Love they highte:
The tone was sad, the tother glad and lighte.[2]

* * * * *

---

[1] Speght reads *for* first, meaning *before* first: Sir Harris Nicolas *the* first; but the true reading would seem to be *tho*, then, meaning *when*, to which it is equivalent in the English of this period. The whole passage will then signify, 'I mind, or watch, in such as are inclined to love, *when* first the thing is thought of in their minds.'

[2] After this stanza there is evidently something wanting to connect the narrative. The Lady Rosial had sent Philobone to show Philogenet what lovers dwelt at the Court of Love, p. 167. After seeing several of these allegorical personages, Golden and Leaden Love enter, whom the poet was about to describe. This description is lost. To supply the gap in the story, the reader should have been informed how Philogenet was conducted back to Rosial, whom we find, in the next stanza, in the middle of a confession of love.

'Yes! drawe your herte, with al your force and might,
To lustines and been as ye have said;
And thinke that I no drop of favour hight,
Ne never had unto your desire obeyed,
Till sodainely me thought me was afraid,
To sene you waxe so dede of countenaunce,
And Pite bade me done you some pleasaunce.

'Out of her shrine she rose from dethe to live,
And in mine ere full privily she spak,
'Doth not your servaunt hence away to drive,
Rosial,' quoth she; 'and than mine herte it brak,
For tenderiche: and where I found much lack
In your person, than I my self bethought,
And said, this is the man mine herte hath sought.'

'Gramercy, Pite! might I but suffise
To give due laud unto thy shrine of gold,
God wot I wold: for sith that thou did rise
From dethe to live for me, I am behold
To thanken you a thousand times told,
And eke my lady Rosial the shene,
Which hath in comfort set mine herte, I wene.

'And here I make mine protestacion,
And depely swere, as mine power,[1] to been
Faithful, devoid of variacion,
And her forbere in anger or in tene,
And serviceable to my worldes quene,
With al my resone and intelligence,
To done her honour high and reverence.'

I had not spoke so soon the word, but she,
My soverein, did thank me heartily,
And said, 'Abide, ye shal dwelle stille with me
Til sesone come of May, for than truly,
The King of Love and all his company

[1] That is, As far as lies in my power.

Shall hold his feste full ryally and welle:'
And there I bode till that the sesone felle.

On May day, whan the lark began to rise,
To matins[1] went the lusty nightingale
Within a temple shapen hawthorn-wise;
He might not slepe in al the nightertale,
But '*Domine labia*,'[2] gan he cry and gale,
'My lippes open, Lord of Love, I crye,
And let my mouth thy praising now bewrye.'

The eagle sang '*Venite*[3] bodies alle,
And let us joye to love that is our health.'
And to the deske anon they gan to falle,
And who came late he pressed in by stealth:[4]
Than said the faucon, our own hertes wealth,

---

[1] The following curious poem is an allegorical paraphrase of the matins for Trinity Sunday, and seems to be founded on the Platonic philosophy, conveyed through the medium of Boethius, whose *De Consolatione* was translated by Alfred, and afterwards by Chaucer himself. According to this philosophy, which in one aspect is that of the New Testament, love is the pervading law of God's government of the universe; and of this law the union of the sexes is a direct manifestation. There appeared to mediæval philosophers, therefore, no inherent incongruity in representing the one by an allegorical representation of the other. This is the principle on which the Song of Solomon is held to convey a religious meaning. It is also recognised in St. Paul's Epistles. The tenderness and constancy of the love which birds bear to their mates would seem to have pointed them out as the fittest of all creatures to act as the priests of Love in offering up the adoration of Universal Nature to the great creative and sustaining principle. This may account for the practice very prevalent among the poets of this period of introducing them into their erotic allegories. In the *fabliau* of *Florence et Blancheflor*, the God of Love, presiding in his tribunal in the month of May, is surrounded by birds, who constitute the ministers of his court. See Intro. to *The Assembly of Foules*.

[2] 'V. Domine labia mea aperies, R. Et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam,' is the verse from the Psalms with which matins began. It is retained in the adaptation of that service in the English Book of Common Prayer. Matins were sung at midnight. There is, therefore, a propriety in making the nightingale begin them.

[3] *Venite* is the first word of Psalm xcv., generally called the Invitatory, which still retains its place in the modern English office.

[4] This expresses exactly what one has seen in a cathedral; the

'*Domine Dominus noster*[1] I wot,
Ye be the God that done us brenne thus hote.'

'*Cœli enarrant*,'[2] said the popingay,
'Your might is told in Heaven and firmament.'
And than came in the goldfinch fresh and gay,
And said this psalm with hertily glad intent,
'*Domini est terra*;'[3] this latin intent,[4]
The God of Love hath yerth in governaunce:
And then the wren gan skippen and to daunce.

'*Jube Domne*[5] O Lord of Love, I praye
Command me wel this lesson for to rede;
This legend is of alle that wolden deye
Martyrs for love; God yet their soules spede!
And to thee Venus singe we, out of drede,
By influence of al thy vertue grete,
Beseeching thee to keep us in our hete.'

The second lesson robin redbreast sang,
'Hail to the God and Goddess of our lay!'
And to the lectorne[6] amorously he sprang:—
'Hail now,' quoth he, 'O fresh seson of May,
Our moneth glad that singen on the spray![7]

---

unhappy chorister who comes late skulks in behind the desks and stalls.

[1] *Domine, Dominus noster*, is the beginning of Psalm viii., and was the first of the special psalms for Trinity Sunday.

[2] *Cœli enarrant* is the beginning of Psalm xix.

[3] *Domini est terra* of Psalm xxiii. These three psalms complete the first Nocturn, as the divisions of the matins were called; and then follow the three lessons from Scripture.

[4] That is, This Latin intends or means, The God of Love, &c.

[5] *Jube Domne benedicere* is not exactly classical Latin, and the meaning is not very obvious; but it is generally translated, 'Sir, pray for a blessing,' and was said by the reader before he read the lesson from Scripture. The superior replied, *Benedictione perpetuâ benedicat nos Pater eternus. Amen.*

[6] The Lectorne was a high desk, often in the form of an eagle carrying the book upon his wings, which stood in the midst of the choir, and from which the lessons were read.

[7] That is, The month which is glad, or pleasant, to us who sing, &c.

Hail to the floures, red, and white, and blew,
Which by their vertue maketh our lust newe!'

The third lesson the turtle-dove took uppe,
And thereat lough the mavis in a scorn:
He said, 'O God, as mote I dine or suppe,
This foolish dove will give us alle an horn!
There been right here a thousand better born,
To rede this lesson, which as wel as he,
And eke as hot, can love in al degre.'

The turtle-dove said, 'Welcome, welcome May,
Gladsom and light to loveres that been trew!
I thank thee Lord of Love that doth purvey
For me to rede this lesson all of due;[1]
For in good soth of courage[2] I pursue
To serve my make til dethe us must depart:'
And than '*Tu autem*'[3] sang he al apart.

'*Te deum amoris*'[4] sang the throstel-cock:
Tuball[5] himselfe, the first musician,
With key of armony could not unlocke,[6]
So swete tune as that the throstel can:
'The Lord of Love we praisen,' quoth he than,
And so done alle the foules grete and lite,
'Honour we May, in false loveres despite.'

---

[1] That is, According to the proper rite.

[2] That is, I endeavour, with all my intent, or courage, to serve, &c.

[3] *Tu autem Domine, misérere nobis*, was said by the reader at the end of each lesson, and all responded *Deo gratias*.

[4] Then follows the *Te Deum*, said to have been composed by St. Ambrose to celebrate the baptism of his convert, St. Augustine, and sung for the first time on that occasion. It has been translated in the Book of Common Prayer.

[5] This ought apparently to be Jubal. 'And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.'—Gen. iv. 21.

[6] The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony.—*L'Allegro*.

'*Dominus regnavit*,'[1] said the pecock there,
'The Lord of Love that mighty prince, ywis,
He is received here and every where:
Now Jubilate sing:'—'What meaneth this?'
Said than the linnet; 'welcome, Lord of blisse!'
Out sterte the owl with '*Benedicite*,'[2]
'What meaneth al this mery fare?' quoth he.

'*Laudate*,'[3] sang the lark with voice ful shrille;
And eek the kite '*O admirabile*;'[4]
This quere wil thorogh mine eres perse and thrille;
But what? welcome this May sesone,' quoth he;
'And honour to the Lord of Love mote be,
That hath this feste so solemn and so high:'
'*Amen*,' said all, and so said eek the pie.

And forth the cockow gan procede anone,
With '*Benedictus*'[5] thanking God in haste,
That in this May would visite them echone,
And gladden them alle while the feste shal laste:
And therewithal a-laughter[6] out he brast,
'I thank it God that I shold ende the song,
And all the service which hath been so long.'

---

[1] Matins are now finished, and Lauds begin with Ps. xciii. *Dominus regnavit*; and Ps. c. *Jubilate*.

[2] *Benedicite* is the initial word of the Song of the Three Children, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, or Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, which follows next. It is retained in the Book of Common Prayer.

[3] Next comes Psalm cxlvii., *Laudate Dominum*.

[4] There is no psalm beginning *O admirabile*, but the *capitulum*, or short chapter for this service is taken from Rom. xi., *O altitudo divitiarum sapientiæ et scientiæ Dei*, for which *O admirabile* is probably written in mistake.

[5] *Benedictus* is the initial word of the Song of Zacharias, which closes the service; it is retained in the Book of Common Prayer.

[6] *A-laughter* appears to be a corruption from *on* or *in* laughter, as we sometimes say *a*-bed, meaning *in* bed, *a*-top, *on* top. It seems to be an allusion to the peculiar way in which the cuckoo, just as he is flying off a bough, reduplicates his note, thus, cuck-cuck-oo, exactly as if he were bursting out into a fit of laughter. This is an example of Chaucer's accurate observation of Nature, of which there are many other indications in these poems.

Thus sange they alle the service of the feste,
And that was done right early, to my dome;
And forth goeth al the court both moste and leste,
To feche the floures freshe, and braunch and blome;
And namely, hawthorn brought both page and grome,
With fresh garlands party blew and white,
And than rejoysen in their great delight.[1]

Eek eche at other threw the floures bright,
The primerose, the violete, and the gold;
So than, as I beheld the ryal sight,
My lady gan me suddenly beholde,
And with a trewe love, plited many a folde,
She smot me through the very heart as blive,
And Venus yet I thank I am alive.

EXPLICIT.

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[1] For the custom of carrying boughs and flowers on the first of May, see vol. i. p. 121, note 2.

THE ASSEMBLY OF FOULES.

[Of this poem two MSS. are known to exist: one mentioned by Tyrwhitt in the Bodleian Library, Fairfax 16, in which it is entitled *The Parlement of Briddes;* and another in the public library at Cambridge, marked Ff. I. 6. The printed texts are those of Urry and Speght.

The system adopted by Urry of forcing every line to consist of ten syllables, by arbitrarily adding expletives or eliding letters, fails to produce even that metrical smoothness which it was his object to obtain; while it renders the language much more obscure than if it had been left in its ancient form, and produces a heterogeneous text which is utterly useless to the grammarian and philologist. Chaucer, of all poets, can least bear to be stretched and lopped by such experiments.

The text of Speght, on the other hand, although more or less assimilated in its orthography to the language of the Elizabethan era, has not been subjected to any excruciating emendations of this description. His edition has, therefore, been selected as the basis of the present text; but, wherever it seemed expedient, the reading of the Cambridge MS. Ff. I. 6 has been adopted. The Editor is indebted to the kindness of his friend, James Orchard Halliwell, Esq., for the improvements derived from this source. That gentleman, whose labours in the department of philology have laid the students of our early literature under important obligations, collated the Cambridge MS. with Urry's text; and the results of his collations, submitted to a second comparison with Speght, have enabled the Editor to place before the readers of this edition a text which, if not so perfect in a philological point of view as that of *The Canterbury Tales,* is considerably purer than that of previous editions, which are in fact mere reprints of Speght, with all his absurd errors of punctuation most conscientiously reproduced. The reader of Chaucer's

minor poems has hitherto had to overcome, as best he might, the difficulty not only of mastering archaic words and orthography, but of clearing up the perplexities of a text in which he occasionally finds a semicolon between the adjective and its substantive, and a full stop between the subject and the verb, and in which it often happens that there is no note of interrogation where a question is asked, nor no note of admiration to distinguish the interjection from the indefinite article A, where such distinction is imperatively required to be marked. In the present edition, he will find these negligences and errors corrected for the first time, and that assistance given to him by punctuation without which even the most familiar current writing of his own day would be unintelligible. In some instances where Speght's orthography represents neither the ancient nor the modern grammatical forms, it has been brought to a uniformity with that of *The Canterbury Tales*.

The Assembly of Foules, in its form and mode of treatment, bears a close resemblance to *The Court of Love*. In both may be traced the same high-bred gallantry which is so conspicuous an element in mediæval poetry. The ardour of the lover's passion never makes him for a moment forget that his lady is his sovereign, who must be addressed with all the respect and ceremony, and whose decision must be received with all the deferential submission, due from a vassal to his feudal superior. Although not so elaborate as *The Court of Love*, this piece displays even more favourably some of Chaucer's special excellencies. Thus, in the speeches of the Goose, the Duck, and the Cuckoo, his grotesque humour and suggestive irony are happily exhibited, while the picture of the garden and the account of the different species of fowls are admirable examples of his faculty of accurate and truthful description. Here, indeed, he appears only in one of his playful moods; but, whether in jest or earnest, every emanation of his mind is vigorous and original. This intellectual power, displayed in the complete command of his resources and the marvellous ease of his transitions, distin-

guishes Chaucer above all other poets. Lydgate's *Floure of Courtesie*, for example, is formed on the same model, contains many passages of great merit, and its versification is quite equal to that of Chaucer; but we feel at once that the difference between them is the difference between strength and weakness.

The structure of *The Assembly of Foules* is exceedingly inartificial. It opens with an introduction, in which the poet professes himself insensible to love, of whose influence he has never had any practical experience. Employing his thoughts till bed-time with a book, by Cicero, called the *Somnium Scipionis*, or *Dream of Scipio*, he falls asleep, and is visited by a dream similar to that about which he has been reading. As in the *Somnium Scipionis* Scipio Africanus appears in a dream to his grandson, Publius, so Chaucer imagines that he appears to him also, and leads him into a garden where, among many allegorical personages, he sees enthroned on a hill of flowers, the Goddess Nature, before whom, it being St. Valentine's day, the various birds are assembled to choose their mates for the year. A dispute takes place between three eagles for the possession of a formel (female) eagle that sits upon Nature's wrist; and at last, after some wrangling, when there appears no other prospect of bringing the matter to a termination, the claims of the eagles are remitted to the conclave of birds. The conflicting opinions delivered by the jury, which are extremely humourous and characteristic, resolve themselves into a shape almost identical with that of the discussions carried on in the Courts of Love. Nature finally gives her judgment, and the poem closes with a song sung by an appointed band of choristers in her honour.

The similarity between this poem and a *fabliau* alluded to in the Introduction to *The Court of Love*, is so striking as to warrant the supposition that Chaucer was in part indebted to that source for the principal feature in his design—the assembly or parliament of birds. There are three versions of the *fabliau*, severally entitled *Huéline et Eglantine, Le Jugement d'Amour*, and *Florence et Blancheflor*. These

versions vary in details; but they all turn on the same point —two young ladies who, one loving a knight and the other a clerk, quarrel about the merits of their lovers, and ultimately agree to refer the matter to the adjudication of the Court of Love. Arrived at the precincts of the palace, they reach a fruit-garden, guarded by a nightingale, who is called the Messenger of the God of Love, probably as the harbinger of spring and the season of pleasure. He offers to conduct them, but warns them that they will be required to pay tribute upon entrance. They inquire what is the tribute, and are informed that it is a kiss; to which they reply with a smile, and enter. The Court is presided over by the God of Love in person, who is discovered reposing on a bed of roses, in a saloon hung with bows and arrows. Upon learning the matter in difference, he calls upon the barons of his Court, who, strange to say, are all birds, and proposes to them to resolve the question of respective merits. The falcon, the hawk, the jay, the magpie, and all the most quarrelsome birds, even to the cuckoo, declare for the knight as the more courteous and worthy lover; while the wren, the pigeon, the skylark, and the goldfinch, pronounce for the clerk. The dispute grows high, and the god is obliged to interpose in vindication of the respect due to the Court. The nightingale now advances, throws down his glove, and offers to sustain with arms against all comers the cause of the clerk. The challenge is accepted by the parrot, and the lists are prepared. Each lady arms her own champion. A rose-leaf forms the helmet, a leaf of marigold the coat or gown, and a blade of sharp grass the sword. The wren is appointed to keep silence. At the first charge the nightingale cuts through the helmet of his adversary, who, being disabled, surrenders his sword. The lady who loves the knight dies of despair. The birds assemble about her, erect a tomb of flowers, and engrave upon it these lines, which, assuredly, says the *fabliau*, were not made by the God of Love:—

Ici est Florence enfoïe
Qui au chevalier fu amie.]

THE lyfe so short, the craft so long to lerne,
Thassay so hard, so sharpe the conquering,
The dreadful joy, alway that flit[1] so yerne;
Al this mene I by Love, that my feeling
Astonieth with his wonderful werkyng
So sore ywis, that whan I on him thinke,
Naught wete I wel whether I flete or sinke.

For al be that I knowe not Love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quiteth folk hir hire,[2]
Yet happeth me ful oft in bokes rede
Of his myracles, and of his cruel ire;
There rede I well, he wol be lorde and sire:
I dare not saye his strokes be sore;
But God save sùche a lorde! I can no more.

Of usage, what for lust and what for lore,
On bookes rede I oft, as I you tolde.[3]
But wherfore speke I al this? Naught yore
Agon, it happed me to beholde
Upon a boke was ywriten with letters olde;
And thereupon, a certain thing to lerne,
The longe day ful fast I radde and yerne.

For out of the old fieldes, as men saith,
Cometh al this newe corne fro yere to yere;
And out of olde bokes, in good faith,

---

[1] The Cambridge MS. reads *slydeth*; but *flit* gives a good sense, and suits the metre better. It is contracted for *flitteth*.

[2] Chaucer appears to be fond of declaring himself insensible to the fascinations of love. Thus, in *Troilus and Cressida*, book i.:—

'Ne dare to love for myn unliklynesse.'

[3] He alludes in *The House of Fame*, also, to his studious habits:—

'For whan thy labour al don is,
And hast made alle thy reckennings,
Instead of rest and newe things,
Thou gost home to thyn house anon,
And also, dombe as a ston,
Thou syttest at another boke
Til fully dased is thy loké.'

Cometh al this newe science that men lere.
But now to purpose, as of this matere:—
To rede forth it gan me so delite,
That all that day me thought it but a lite.

'This boke, of which I make mencion,
Entitled was right thus, as I shal telle:—
'Tullius, of the dreame of Scipion:'[1]
Chapiters seven it had, of Hevene and Helle,
And earth, and soules that thereinne dwelle,
Of which, as shortly as I can it trete
Of his sentence I wol you saine the grete.[2]

First telleth it, whan Scipion was come
In Affricke, how he meteth Massinisse,
That him for joye in armes hath ynome.
Than telleth he hir speche and al the blisse,
That was betwixt hem til the day gan misse;
And how his auncester, Affrikan so dere,
Gan in his slepe that night til him appere.

Than telleth it,[3] that, from a sterrie place,
How Affrikan hath him Cartage shewed,
And warned him before of al his grace,
And said him, what man, lered eyther lewde,
That loveth common profite, well ithewde,
He should into a blisful place wende,
There as the joy is without any ende.

---

[1] Cicero's treatise entitled *Somnium Scipionis*, upon which Macrobius, a Latin writer of the latter end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century, wrote an elaborate commentary in two books. P. C. Scipio is supposed to relate that, on his going to Africa as tribune in the Fourth Legion in the third Punic war, he was visited by Massinissa, King of Numidia, the friend of Scipio Africanus the elder. At this meeting much of their conversation naturally consists of reminiscences of Africanus; and when Publius retires to rest, he dreams that Africanus appears to him, foretels his future career, and discourses of the immortality of the soul, and of the rewards and punishments of the next world.

[2] That is, 'I will tell you the greater part, or the substance, of his discourse.

[3] The Cambridge MS. reads *Than telleth he hym.*

Than asked he, if folk that here been dede
Have life, and dwelling in another place?
And Affrikan said, Ye, without any drede:
And [told him] how our present lives space,
Ment but a maner dethe, what way we trace;
And rightful folk shalle gon after they die
To Hevene; and shewed him the Galaxie.[1]

Than shewed he him the little earth that here is,
To regard of the Hevenes quantite;[2]
And after shewed hym the nine speris;[3]
And after that the melodie herde he,
That commeth of thilke speres thrise three,
That welles of musicke been and melodie
In this world here, and cause of armonie.

Than said he him, sens Earth was so lite,
And ful of tourment, and of harde grace,
That he ne sholde him in this world delite.
Than told he him, in certain yeres space,
That every sterre should come into his place,

---

[1] The milky way. The original is, 'Erat autem is splendidissimo candore inter flammas circus lucens, quem vos, ut a Graiis accepistis, *orbem lacteum* nuncupatis.'

[2] That is, The earth, which is little in regard of, or compared with, the size of the heavens.

[3] The nine spheres. 'Novem tibi orbibus, vel potius globis, connexa sunt omnia, quorum, unus est cœlestis extimus, qui reliquos omneis complectitur, summus ipse Deus, arcens et continens ceteras; in quo infixi sunt illi, qui volvuntur, stellarum cursus sempiterni, cui subjecta sunt septem qui versantur retro,' &c. The nine spheres or globes are, according to this philosophy, God himself, who confines and contains all the rest, the planets Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus. Mercury, Luna, and the Earth, round which last they all revolve, and in their revolutions produce an harmonious concord, called the 'music of the spheres;' the more distant planets, whose revolutions must be more rapid, producing the acute, and the nearer the grave or base, sounds. 'Hic inquam, quis est, qui complet aureis mens tantus, et tam dulcis sonus? Hic est, inquit ille, qui intervallis conjunctus imparibus, sed tamen pro ratâ portione distinctis, impulsu et motu ipsorum orbium conficitur; qui acuta cum gravibus temperans varios equabiliter concentus efficit; nec enim silentio tanti motus mutari possunt, et Natura fert ut extrema ex alterâ parte graviter, ex alterâ autem acute, sonent.'—*Somnium Scipionis.*

There it was first; and al should out of mind,
That in this world is done of al mankind.

Than prayed him Scipion to tell him al
The way to come into that Hevene blisse:
And he said: 'First know thy self immortal,
And loke aye besely that thou werche and wisse
To common profite, and thou shalt not misse
To come swiftely unto that place dere,
That ful of blisse is, and of soules clere.

'And breakers of the law, soth to saine,
And likerous folk, after that they been dede,
Shal whirle about the world alway in paine,
Til many a world be passed, out of drede;
And than foryeven all hir wicked dede,
Than shullen they come to that blisful place,
To which to comen God send thee grace.'[1]

The day gan failen, and the darke night,
That reveth bestes from hir businesse,
Berafte me my boke for lacke of light,
And to my bedde I gan me for to dresse,
Fulfilled of thought and besie heavinesse;
For both I hadde thyng which that I nold,
And eke I ne had that thing that I wold.

But finally, my spirite atte laste
Forweary of my labour al that day,
Tooke rest, that made me to slepe faste;

[1] The idea that those who are not good enough to be admitted to heaven at once, and not bad enough to be condemned to eternal misery, are subjected to some purificatory process after death, seems to have recommended itself to men's minds in all ages. We find it in Virgil, *Æneid* vi., and in the *Somnium Scipionis*. 'Nam eorum animi qui se corporis voluptatibus dederunt, earumque se, quasi ministros præbuerunt, impulsuque libidinum voluptatibus obedientium, Deorum et hominum jura violaverunt, corporibus elapsi circum terram ipsam volutantur, nec hunc in locum nisi multis exagitati seculis, revertuntur.'

And in my sleepe I mette,[1] as that I say,
How Affrikan, right in the self aray
That Scipion him saw before that tide,
Was come, and stode right at my beddes side.

The wearie hunter sleeping in his bedde,
To[2] wood ayen his mind goeth anone;
The judge dremeth how his plees be spedde;
The carter dremeth how his cartes gone;
The rich of gold, the knight[3] fights with his fone;
The sicke mette he drinketh of the tonne;
The lover mette he hath his lady wonne.[4]

Can I not saine, if that the cause were,
For I had radde of Affrikan beforne,
That made me to mete that he stood there;
But thus said he: 'Thou hast thee so well borne
In looking of mine olde boke al to-torne,
Of which Macrobie[5] raught not a lite,
That some dele of thy labour wold I quite.'

Citherea, thou blisful lady swete!
That with thy fire brond dauntest whan thee lest,
That madest me this sweven for to mete,
Be thou my helpe in this, for thou maist best!
As wisely as I seigh the north northwest,[6]
Whan I began my sweven for to write,
So yeve me might to rime it[7] and endite.

---

[1] Chaucer is fond of this mode of introducing his poems; he adopts it in *The Boke of the Duchess*, *The House of Fame*, and *Chaucer's Dream*.

[2] This is the reading of the Cambridge MS., Ff. I. 6. Speght reads *The wood*, &c.

[3] The Cambridge MS. reads 'The knight to fight,' &c., which suits neither the metre nor the sense so well as the reading in the text.

[4] This is evidently the prototype of Mercutio's description of Queen Mab and her inspirations in *Romeo and Juliet*.

[5] See *ante*, p. 189. note 1.

[6] The Cambridge MS. reads 'I seigh the north-west.' The meaning of either reading is not clear.

[7] The Cambridge MS. for 'it' reads 'eke.'

This foresaid Affrikan me hent anone,
And forthewith me[1] to a gate [he] brought
Right of a parke, walled with grene stone;
And over the gate, with letters large ywrought,
There were verse ywriten, as me thought,
On either halfe, of ful grete difference,
Of whiche I shal you saye the playne sentence:—

'Through me men gon into the blisful place,
Of hertes hele and dedly woundes cure;
Through me men gon into the welle of grace,
There grene and lusty May shall ever endure;
This is the way to al good aventure;
Be glad, thou reader, and thy sorow of caste;
Al open am I, passe in and spede thee faste.'

'Through me men gon,' than spake the other side,
'Unto the mortal strokes of the spere,
Of which disdaine and danger is the guide,
There never tree shal fruit ne leaves bere;
This streme you ledeth to the soroweful were,
There as the fish in pryson is al dry;[2]
The eschewing is onely[3] the remedy.'[4]

These verses of golde and asure[5] ywriten were,
Of which I gan astonied to beholde;
For with that one encreased al my feare,

[1] Speght reads *him*, which is clearly an inversion of the meaning.

[2] The Cambridge MS. reads, 'There as fisches in pryson all dye,' which does not nearly so well describe the state of fish in a weir, nor of those who are in a place of punishment.

[3] The Cambridge MS. for 'onely' reads 'comynly,' which is not so good.

[4] The idea of the two gates seems to be taken from the gates through which are supposed to issue the true and false dreams in the *Odyssey*, T. 561:—

δοιαὶ γάρ τε πύλαι ἀμενηνῶν εἰσιν ὀνείρων
αἱ μὲν γὰρ κεράεσσι τετεύχαται αἱ δ' ἐλέφαντι.

The same idea is to be found in Propertius, iv. 7, 87; Horace, *Odes*, iii. 27, 41; Virgil, *Æneid*, vi. 894.

[5] Many MSS., especially of the Gospels, are written in gold letters on an azure ground.

And with that other gan my herte to bolde;
That one me hette, that other did me colde;[1]
No wit had I, for errour, for to chese,
To entere or flie, or me to save or lese.

Right as betwene adamantes two
Of even weight, a peece of yron sette[2]
Ne hath no might to move ne to ne fro;
For what that one may hale that other lette:
So fared I, that I nist where me was bet
To entre or leave, til Affrikan, my guide,
Me hent and shove in at the gates wide.

And said, 'It standeth written in thy face,
Thin errour,[3] though thou telle it not me;
But drede thee not to come into this place;
For this writing is nothing ment by thee,
Ne by none but he Loves servaunt bee;
For thou of love hast lost thy taste, I gesse,
As sicke man hath of swete and bitternesse.

'But natheles, although thou be dulle,
That thou canst not doe, yet mayst thou see;
For many a man that may not stande a pulle,
Yet liketh it him at the wrestlyng for to be,
And demeth yet, whether he doe bet, or he;
And, if thou haddest connyng for tendite,
I shal thee shew matter of to write.'

And with that my hand in his he toke anon,
Of which I comfort caught, and went in faste.
But Lord! so I was glad and wel begon!

---

[1] The Cambridge MS. reads *me made colde;* but Speght's reading seems better, and more like Chaucer's idiom. *To do* has the sense of to make, as in the Host's words, 'Do him come forth,' make him come forth. *Colde* is here a verb, and the construction is, Did me (*i.e.* made me) colde (*i.e.* grow cold).

[2] The Cambridge MS. reads, 'Of hevye yren myght a pece be sette;' but this does not give so good a sense as Speght's reading, which is therefore retained.

[3] *Scil.*, in not being a lover.

For over alle, where I mine eyen caste,
Were trees clad with leaves that aie shal last,
Eche in his kind, with colour fresh and grene
As emeraude, that joy it was to sene.

The bilder[1] oke, and eke the hardy asshe,
The piller[2] elme, the coffre unto caraine,
The boxe pipe tree,[3] holme to whippes lasshe,[4]
The sailing firre,[5] the cipres dethe to plaine,
The shooter ewe,[6] the aspe for shaftes plaine,[7]
The olive of peace, and eke the dronken vine,
The victor palme,[8] the laurer,[9] too, divine.

A gardein saw I ful of blosomed bowis,
Upon a river, in a grene mede,
There as swetenesse evermore inough is,

---

[1] The reader will observe the life and spirit which the personification of the several trees gives to this catalogue. It is common in French, even in prose, as, for instance, the weeping willow is *le saule pleureur*, the weeper willow. The oak is called *builder*, because no other wood was used in building in this country in the middle ages, as may be seen in our old churches and farm-houses, in which the stairs are often made of solid blocks of the finest oak.

[2] The elm is called *pillar*, perhaps because it is planted as a pillar or support to the vine; and *coffre unto carraine*, because coffins for carrion or corpses were usually made of elm.

[3] The box, being a hard, fine-grained wood, was used for making pipes or horns, as in *The Nonne Prestes Tale*:—

'Of bras they broughten hornes and of box.'

[4] *Holme to whippes lasshe*, means the holme used for making handles for whip-lashes.

[5] *The sailing firre* alludes to the ship's masts and spars being made of fir.

[6] *The shooter ewe* alludes to the fact that the material of our national weapon, the bow, was yew. It is said that the old yews which are found in country church-yards were planted in order to supply the yeomanry with bows.

[7] The aspe is the aspen, or black poplar, of which shafts or arrows were made.

[8] It is, perhaps, needless to remind the reader that the olive is the emblem of peace, or to point out the propriety of the epithet *dronken*, as applied to the vine, or that of *victor*, as applied to the palm.

[9] The *laurer* (French, laurier), laurel, is called *divine*, because sacred to Apollo, the god of divination, or soothsaying.—See Ovid, *Met.* i., 558.

With floures white, blewe, yelowe, and rede,
And colde welle streames,[1] nothing dede,
That swommen fulle of smale fishes light,
With finnes rede, and scales silver bright.

On every bough the birdes heard I singe,
With voice of angel in hir armonie,
That busied hem hir birdes forth to bring;
The prety conies to hir playe gan hie;[2]
And further al about I gan espie,
The dredeful roe, the buck, the hart, and hind,
Squirrels, and bestes smale, of gentle kind.

Of instruments of stringes[3] in accorde
Heard I so playe a ravishing swetenesse,
That God, that maker is of alle and Lorde,
Ne heard never better, as I gesse:
Therewith a wind, unneth it might be lesse,
Made in the leaves grene a noise soft,[4]
Accordant to the foules song on loft.

The aire of the place so attempre was,
That never was ther grevance of hot ne cold:
There was eke every holsome spice and gras,
Ne no man may there waxe sicke ne old:
Yet was there more joy o thousand fold
Than I can tell, or ever could or might;
There is ever clere day, and never night.

Under a tree, beside a welle, I sey
Cupide our lorde his arrowes forge and file;
And at his feete his bowe already lay;

---

[1] The reader will observe the beauty of the expression 'colde welle streames.' *Nothing dede* means not stagnant.

[2] Speght reads 'The little pretty conies to hir play can hie'—an alexandrine.

[3] The Cambridge MS. reads *strong*, which is not so good.

[4] The Cambridge MS. reads *so soft*, which weakens the line, and is, besides, unnecessary for the metre, if the final *e* of *noise* be sounded.

And wel his doughter[1] tempred, al the while,
The heddes in the welle; and with her wile
She couched[2] hem after, as they should serve
Some to slee, and some to wound and kerve.

Tho was I ware of Pleasaunce anon right,
And of Array, Lust, Beauty, and Curtesie,
And of the Craft, that can and hath the might
To don by force a wight to don folie:
Disfigured was she, I will not lie:
And by him selfe, under an oke I gesse,
Sawe I Delite, that stood with Gentlenesse.

Than saw I Beauty, with a nice attire,
And Youth, full of game and jolitee,
Foole-hardinesse, Flatterie, and Desire,
Messagerie,[3] Mede, and other three;
Hir names shall not here be told for me:
And upon pillers grete, of jasper longe,
I sawe a temple of brasse yfounded strong.

And about the temple daunced alway
Women inow, of whiche some there were
Faire of hemselfe, and some of hem were gay;
In kirtils all disheveled went they there;
That was their office ever, fro yere to yere:
And on the temple saw I, white and faire,
Of doves sitting many a thousand paire.[4]

And before the temple doore, ful soberly,
Dame Peace sat, a curtaine in her honde;[5]
And her beside, wonder discretely,

[1] There appears to be no classical authority for giving Cupid a daughter; but her occupation is well imagined.

[2] *Couched hem* means *laid them in order*.—See vol. iii., *Chanoune Yemannes Tale*, in which the word occurs very often in this sense.

[3] *Messagerie* means the carrying of messages. Who the other three personages whose names are not to be told are, is difficult to determine: perhaps the poet means only to exercise the reader's ingenuity in guessing.

[4] Because doves, from their amorous disposition, are supposed to be sacred to Venus.

[5] Peace sits before the temple-gate, because the quiet and leisure of

Dame Pacience sitting there I fonde,[1]
With face pale, upon an hille of sonde;
And alther next, withinne and withoute,
Behest and Arte, and of her folke a route.[2]

Within the temple of sighes, hote as fire,
I heard a swough,[3] that gan aboute ren;
Which sighes were engendred with desire,
That made every herte for to bren
Of newe flambe; and well espied I then,
That al the cause of sorowes that they drie
Come of the bitter goddess Jalousie.

The god Priapus[4] saw I as I went
Within the temple, in soverain place, stonde
In such array, as whan the asse him shent
With crie by night,[5] and with sceptre in honde:
Full busilie men gan assaye and fonde,
Upon his hedde to sette, of sondrie hewe,
Garlandes fulle of freshe floures newe.

And in a privie corner, in disport
Found I Venus and her porter Richesse,
That was ful noble and hautein of her port;

---

a state of peace are favourable to the pursuits of gallantry. She holds a curtain in her hand, perhaps because refinement of manners, the offspring of peace, draws a veil or curtain over what is gross and offensive.

[1] The propriety of representing Patience as sitting on a hill of sand appears to consist in this—that her chief virtue is quiet endurance in the most insecure and unhopeful circumstances.

[2] Behest, or promise, and Arte, are well represented as filling, with a crowd of their retinue and dependants, every corner of the entrance to the Temple of Love.

[3] The Cambridge MS. for *swough* reads *schowte*, which is nonsense. The meaning of the passage is, 'I heard a swough (*i.e.* a confused noise, see vol. i. p. 152, note 2) of sighs, which began to run about, which sighs were engendered,' &c. To speak of a *shout* of sighs is absurd.

[4] The Cambridge MS. reads *Priamus*.

[5] The allusion is to the adventure of Priapus, related by Ovid in the *Fasti*, lib. i. 415.

Darke was that place, but, after, lightnesse
I sawe a lite, unnethes it might be lesse;
And on a bedde of golde she lay to reste,
Till that the hote Sonne gan to weste.[1]

Her gilte heeres with a golde threde
Ybound were, untressed as she lay;
And naked from the brest unto the hede
Men might her see; and, sothly for to saie,
The remnaunt, covered welle, to my paie,
Right with a little kerchefe of Valence;[2]
There was no thicker clothe of defence.

The place gave a thousand savoures soote,
And Bacchus god of wine sate her beside;
And Ceres next,[3] that doeth of hunger boote;
And, as I said, amiddes lay Cupide,
To whom on knees the yonge folkes cride
To be their helpe; but thus I let her lie,
And farther in the temple gan espie,[4]

That, in dispite of Diané the chaste,
Ful many a bowe ybroke hing on the walle,[5]
Of maidenes, suche as gone hir times waste
In her service: and painted over alle,
Of many a storie, of which I touch shalle
A fewe, as of Calixte, and Athalant,[6]
And many a maid, of which the name I want.

---

[1] *West* here seems to be a verb, meaning to draw towards the west; the 'westling sun' occurs in modern writers.

[2] Valentia, in Spain, celebrated for the manufacture of very fine transparent cloths.

[3] This is an allusion to the well-known proverb, 'Sine Baccho et Cerere friget Venus.'

[4] Speght reads 'And farther in the temple I gan espie,' producing an excess in the measure, which is avoided by the omission of the personal pronoun.

[5] Trophies of the conquest of Venus.

[6] Calisto and Atalanta.—See vol. i. p. 156, notes 1 and 4.

Semyramus,[1] Candace,[2] and Hercules,[3]
Biblis,[4] Dido, Tisbe, and Piramus,
Tristram, Isoude,[5] Paris, and Achilles,
Helaine, Cleopatre, and Troilus,
Sylla,[6] and eke the mother of Romulus:[7]—
Alle these were paynted on that other side,
And al hir love, and in what plite they dide.

Whan I was commen ayen into the place
That I of spake, that was so soote and grene,
Forth walked I tho my selven to solace:
Tho was I ware, where there sate a quene,
That, as of light the sommer Sunne shene
Passeth the sterre, right so over mesure,
She fairer was than any creature.

---

[1] Semiramis, Queen of Babylon, and wife of Ninus, whom she put to death. Her alleged licentiousness entitles her to a place in the Temple of Venus. See Valerius Maximus, ix. 3.

[2] Canace, the daughter of Æolus and Enaretta, is probably the person intended. Her Epistle to her brother Macareus is the ninth of Ovid's *Heroides*.

[3] Hercules is entitled to a niche in the Temple of Venus, as an example of her power in subduing the strongest of men. The allusion is to his spinning with the distaff of Omphale, who beat him with her slipper.

[4] The story of Biblis is told by Ovid, *Metam.* ix. 415. The Cambridge MS reads Fillis, meaning Phyllis, the daughter of Lycurgus, King of Thrace, who hanged herself for love of Demophoon. Her letter to him forms Epist. ii. of Ovid's *Heroides*.

[5] Tristram and Isoude are the hero and heroine of one of the most celebrated of the mediæval romances. Sir Walter Scott printed an edition of it from a MS. in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh.

[6] By Sylla is meant, not the Roman Dictator, but either Scylla, the daughter of Nisus, King of Megara, who for love of Minos betrayed her father and country, and afterwards in despair threw herself into the sea and was changed into a lark, which was doomed to be pursued by her father, who was changed into a hawk.—Ovid, *Tristia*, ii. 393. Or Scylla, who was changed by Circe into a sea-monster.—Ovid, *Metam.* xiv.

[7] Ilia, daughter of Numitor, consecrated by her uncle Amulius to the service of Vesta, and buried alive by him for violating her vows.—*Vide* Livy, lib. i.

And in a launde, upon an hille of floures,
Was sette this noble goddesse Nature;[1]
Of branches were her halles and her boures
Ywrought, after her craft and her mesure;
Ne there nas foul that cometh of engendrure,
That there ne were prest, in her presence,
To take hir dome, and yeve hir audience.

For this was on sainct Valentines day,[2]
Whan every foule cometh to chese hir make,
Of every kind that men thinke may;

---

[1] The reader will remark the close resemblance between the structure of this poem and that of *The Court of Love*, already pointed out in the Introduction to the latter poem. In these and in many detached passages of Chaucer's other poems, may be detected a tendency to pantheism, or the worshipping a principle supposed to pervade the Universe, rather than a personal Deity. But Chaucer's pantheism does not appear to have sunk so deep as to corrupt his faith, but rather to have been a poetical day-dream, in which his intense love of nature made his imagination delight to revel.

[2] The origin of the custom of choosing valentines on St. Valentine's day is involved in obscurity. It has no connexion with St. Valentine, who was an exemplary priest, put to death for the faith of Christ about A.D. 280. Butler, in his *Lives of the Saints*, assigns to it a heathen origin. He says, 'To abolish the heathen, lewd, superstitious custom of boys drawing the names of girls in honour of their goddess Februata Juno on the 14th of February, several zealous pastors substituted the names of saints in billets given on that day.' The heathen custom, however, has survived all these attempts to abolish it, and remains enshrined in our poetry and popular customs. In the catalogue of Lydgate's works, printed at the end of Speght's edition of Chaucer, is a ballad entitled *Chusing Loves on St. Valentine's Day*; and in a poem written by him in praise of Queen Catherine, consort of Henry V., in the Harl. collection, 2251, the following stanza occurs:—

'Seynte Valentine, of custom yeere by yeere
Men have an usaunce in this regioun,
To loke and serche Cupide's Kalendere,
And choose theyr choyse by grete affeccioun;
Such as ben prike with Cupid's mocioun,
Taking theyr choyce as theyr sort doth falle;
But I love oon which excellith alle.'

Mr. Pepys, in his diary for this day, in the year 1667, has the following characteristic entry. 'This morning came up to my wife's bedside, I being up dressing myself, Little Will. Mercer to her Valentine, and

And that so huge a noise gan they make,
That earth, [and] sea, and tree, and every lake,
So ful was, that unnethe there was space
For me to stande, so ful was al the place.

And right as Alain, in the Plaint of Kinde,[1]
Deviseth Nature of such araie and face;
In suche aray men might her there finde.
This noble empresse, ful of alle grace,
Bad every foule take hir owne place,
As they were wont alway, fro yere to yere,
On sainct Valentines day standen there.

That is to say, the foules of ravine
Were highest sette; and then the foules smale,
That eaten, as that nature would encline,
As worme foule,[2] of which I telle no tale;
But water foule sat lowest in the dale,
And foules that liveth by seed sat on the grene,
And that so many, that wonder was to sene.

There might men the royal egle finde,
That with his sharpe looke perseth the Son;
And other egles of a lower kinde,
Of which that clerkes wel devisen con;
There was the tyrant with his fethers don

---

brought her name written upon blue paper, in gold letters done by himself, very pretty; and we were both well pleased with it. But I am also this year my wife's valentine, and it will cost me 5*l.*, but that I must have laid out if we had not been valentines.' He adds, 'I find that Mrs. Pierce's little girl is my valentine, she having drawn me; which I was not sorry for, it easing me of something more that I must have given to others. But here I do first observe the fashion of drawing of mottos as well as names; so that Pierce, who drew my wife, did also draw a motto, and this girl drew another for me. What mine was I forgot; but my wife's was 'Most courteous and most kind.'' The custom of drawing valentines has quite disappeared, and has been replaced by that of sending anonymous verses and presents.

[1] Alanus de Insulis, among other things wrote a booke, *De Planctu Naturæ*.

[2] The reading of the Cambridge MS. is here adopted, in preference to Speght's, *or thing*.

And grene, I mean the goshauke[1] that doth pine
To birdes, for his outragious ravine.

The gentle faucon,[2] that with his fete distreineth
The kinges hand; the hardy sperhauke eke,
The quailes foe; the merlion[3] that peineth
Himself ful ofte the larke for to seke;
There was the dove, with her eyen meke;
The jelous swan, ayenst his deth that singeth;[4]
The oul eke, that of deth the bode bringeth.[5]

The crane, the geaunt, with his trompes soune:
The thief the chough,[6] and the chattring pie;
The scorning jaye,[7] the eles foe the heroune;[8]

---

[1] The goshawk is the largest and fiercest of the short-winged hawks. It and the sparrowhawk are the only hawks of this species used in falconry. Their manner of taking their prey is quite different from that of the long-winged hawks; when the game is flushed they dart at it immediately, and if they fail in taking it at the first pounce, they fly to a tree, where they sit till it is again put up.

[2] The gentle falcon is the *falco peregrinus* (see vol. ii., p. 216, note 1.), one of the most esteemed of the long-winged hawks, and beautifully described as distreining the king's hand with its foot, because carried by persons of the highest rank, and petted by them even on occasions of ceremony. Thus Sir Walter Scott, *Hist. of Scotland*, vol. i., relates, that Mary of Guise, the Queen Regent, making some unpalatable request of the Earl of Angus, he answered her, as if speaking to a hawk which he *held on his wrist, and was feeding at the time*, 'The devil,' said he, 'is in the greedy gled (kite). Will she never be full?'

[3] The merlin is the smallest of the long-winged hawks, and was generally carried by ladies.

[4] The idea that swans sing before their death is of great antiquity; but Pliny, *Hist.* x. 23, says, 'Olorum morte narratur flebilis cantus, falsò ut arbitror aliquot experimentis.' The domestic swan is called sometimes the 'mute swan,' because it has no voice; the wild swan, when on the wing, makes a loud hooping, which, when heard from a distance, has a very sweet sound.

[5] Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo
Sæpe queri, et longas in fletum ducere voces.—*Æneid.* iv., 462.

[6] The chough, or red-legged Cornish crow, like its relative the magpie, has a strange fancy for anything that glitters, and has been known to carry off a fire-brand.

[7] The epithet *scorning* is applied to the jay, probably, because it follows, and seems to mock at, the owl, whenever the latter is so unfortunate as to be caught abroad in the day-light; for this reason a trap for jays is always baited with a live owl.

[8] The heron will stand for hours in the shallow water watching for eels.

The false lapwing, ful of trecherie;[1]
The stare, that the counsaile can bewrie;[2]
The tame ruddocke, and the coward kite;
The cocke, that horiloge is of thorpes lite.[3]

The sparowe Venus' son,[4] and the nightingale
That clepeth forth the freshe leaves newe;
The swalwe, murdrer of the bees smale,
That maken honie of floures fresh of hewe;
The wedded turtelle, with his herte true;
The pecocke, with his angel fethers bright;[5]
The fesaunt, scorner of the cocke by night.[6]

The waker gose,[7] the cuckowe ever unkinde,
The popingey, ful of delicasy;
The drake, stroier of his owne kinde;[8]

---

[1] The epithet *false* is applied to the lapwing, because of the artifices she uses to mislead men or animals of prey when they come near her nest, on which occasions she feigns herself wounded, and flutters along the ground to induce them to follow her until she is satisfied that her nest is safe, when she suddenly takes to flight.

[2] This is perhaps an allusion to some popular story like *The Manciple's Tale*, in which a talking starling or stare betrays a secret.

[3] The reader will observe the picturesque image which this line calls up before the mind's eye. It brings before us the little remote village or thorpe which lies embosomed in the English landscape, and the hinds, called up in the early morning by the crowing of the cock, their only horologe or clock, betaking them to their daily labour.

[4] The sparrow is sacred to Venus. Thus in Lily's play of *Alexander and Campaspe*, *Songs from the Dramatists*, p. 50:—

'He stakes his quiver, bow and arrows,
His mother's doves and team of sparrows.'

[5] In many mediæval paintings the feathers of angels' wings are represented as those of peacocks.

[6] Perhaps an allusion to the fact that pheasants often resort to the farm-yards, and breed with the domestic poultry.

[7] The night is the favourite feeding-time of all the goose tribe; but there may be an allusion to the well-known story of the geese, by their cackling, giving the alarm, when the Gauls attempted to surprise the capitol.

[8] The farmers' wives find the drake or mallard the greatest enemy of their young ducks, whole broods of which he will destroy unless removed.

The storke, wreker of advoutry;[1]
The hote cormeraunt, ful of glotony;
The ravin and the crowe, with her voice of care;
The throstel olde,[2] and the frostie feldfare.[3]

What should I say? Of foules of every kinde,
That in this world have fetheres and stature,
Men mighte in that place assembled finde,
Before that noble goddesse of Nature;
And eche of them did his busie cure
Benignely to chese, or for to take,
By her accorde, his formel or his make.

But to the point:—Nature held on her hond
A formel[4] egle, of shape the gentillest
That ever she among her workes fond,
The most benigne, and eke the goodliest
In her was every vertue at his rest,
So farforth that Nature her selfe had blisse,
To looke on her and oft her beeke to kisse.

Nature, the vicar of the almightie Lord,
That hote, colde, hevie, light, moist, and drie,
Hath knit, by even number of accord,[5]

[1] The following curious story, told by Bishop Stanley, in his entertaining *History of Birds*, 6th edit., p. 322, illustrates the propriety of the character here given to the stork. 'A French surgeon, at Smyrna, wishing to procure a stork, and finding great difficulty, on account of the extreme veneration in which they are held by the Turks, stole all the eggs out of a nest, and replaced them with those of a hen: in process of time the young chickens came forth, much to the astonishment of Mr. and Mrs. Stork. In a short time Mr. S. went off, and was not seen for two or three days, when he returned with an immense crowd of his companions, who all assembled in the place, and formed a circle, taking no notice of the numerous spectators which so unusual an occurrence had collected. Mrs. Stork was brought forward into the midst of the circle, and, after some consultation, the whole flock fell upon her and tore her to pieces; after which they immediately dispersed, and the nest was entirely abandoned.'

[2] Whence the belief in the longevity of the thrush is derived is not known

[3] The field-fare, a migratory bird of the thrush kind, visits this country only in severe frost and snow.

[4] Formel means the female, as tercel does the male, of birds of prey.

[5] This is the doctrine of Lucretius, which he derived from Epicurus.

In easie voice, began to speake and say,
'Foules take hede of my sentence I pray;
And for your own ease, in furdring of your need,
As fast as I may speak I will me speed.

'Ye knowe wel how on Saint Valentines day,
By my statute, and through my governance,
Ye do chese your makes, and after flie away
With hem, as I pricke you with pleasaunce;
But nathelesse, as by rightful ordinaunce,
May I not lette, for all this world to winne,
But he that most worthiest is shal beginne.

'The tercel[1] egle, as ye know ful wele
The foule royal, above you alle in degre,
The wise and worthie, the secret, true as stele,
The which I have formed, as ye may see,
In every parte, as it best liketh mee,—
It nedeth not his shape you to devise,—
He shal first chese, and speken in his gise.

'And after him, by order shalle ye chese,
After your kinde, everiche as you liketh;
And as your hap is, shalle ye winne or lese;
But which of you that love most entriketh,[2]
God sende him her, that sorest for him siketh:'—
And therewithal the tercel gan she calle,
And said, 'My sonne, the choise is to thee falle.

'But nathelesse, in this condicion
Must be the choice of everiche that is here,
That she agree to his election,
Who so he be, that sholde been her fere;
This is our usage alway, fro yere to yere;
And who so may at this time have this grace,
In blisful time he came into this place.'

[1] See *ante*, page 205, note 4.

[2] The Cambridge MS. reads *entiketh*, meaning apparently enticeth; but there seems no sufficient reason to disturb Speght's reading, for *entrikith* would mean to entangle, (French, *intriguer*,) which gives an appropriate sense.

With hed enclined and with ful humble chere,
This ryal tercel spake, and taried nought:—
'Unto my soveraine lady, and not my fere,
I chose and chese, with wille, herte, and thought,
The formel on your hand, so wel ywrought,
Whose I am alle, and ever wil her serve,
Doe what her luste, to doe me live or sterve.

'Besechyng her of mercy and of grace,
As she that is my ladie soveraine,
Or let me die here present in this place,
For certes longe may I not live in paine,
For in my herte is corven every vaine;[1]
Having regard onely to my trouthe,
My dere herte, have on my wo some routhe.

'And if I be founde to her untrue,
Disobeisaunt, or wilful negligent,
Avauntour, or in[2] processe love a newe,
I pray to you this be my judgement,
That with these foules I be al to-rent,
That ilke day that she me ever find
To her untrue, or in my gilte unkind.

'And sith that none loveth her so wel as I,
Although she never of love me behet,
Than ought she be mine through her mercy,
For other bonde can I none on her knet:
For wele nor wo, never shal I let
To serve her, how farre so that she wende:
Say what you list, my tale is at an ende.'

Right as the fresh redde rose newe
Against the sommer Sunne coloured is;
Right so, for shame, al waxen gan the hewe

[1] That is, Every vein in my heart is cut; my heart is wounded with the love of the formel.

[2] The Cambridge MS. reads *by* processe; of time is understood.

Of this formel,[1] whan she heard al this;
Neither she answerde welle, ne said amis,
So sore abashed was she; til that Nature
Said 'Doughter drede you not, I you assure.'

Another tercel egle spake anon
Of lower kind, and said that should not be:—
'I love her better than ye doe, by saint Johan!
Or at the least I love her as wel as ye,
And lenger have served her in my degree;
And if she should have loved for long loving,
To me alone had been the guerdoning.

'I dare eke say, if she me finde false,
Unkind jangler, or rebel in any wise,
Or jelous, doe me hange by the halse;
And but I beare me in her servise
As well as my wit can me suffise,
Fro point to point her honour for to save,
Take she my life and al the good I have.'

The third tercel egle answerde tho,
'Now sirs, ye see the little leaser here;[2]
For every foule crieth out to be ago
Forth with his make, or with his lady dere!
And eke Nature her self ne will not here,
For tarying her, not half that I would seye,
And but I speke, I must for sorrow deye.

'Of long service avaunt I me nothing,
But as possible is me to die to day
For wo, as he that hath be languishing
This twenty winter, and wel it happen may,
A man may serve better, and more to pay
In half a year, although it were no more
Than some man doth that hath served ful yore.

[1] It is not in character for an eagle to blush.
[2] That is, 'You see that we have but little leisure.'

'I ne say not this by me, for I ne can
Do no service that may my lady please;
But I dare say I am her trewest man,[1]
As to my dome, and fainest wolde her please[2]
At shorte wordes, til that dethe me cease,
I wil be hers, whether I wake or winke,
And trewe in al that herte may bethinke.'

Of al my life, sith that day I was borne,
So gentle plee[3] in love or other thing,
Ne herde never no man me beforne;
Who so that had leiser and conning
For to reherse their chere and their speaking:
And from the morrow gan this speche laste,
Til downward went the Sunne wonder faste.

The noyse of foules for to be deliverd
So loude rang, 'Have don and let us wende,'
That wel weend I the wood had al to-shiverd:
'Come off!' they cryd, 'alas, ye wille us shende!
Whan shal your cursed pleding have an ende?
How should a judge either party leve,
For ye or nay, withouten any preve?'

The goos, the duck, and the cuckowe also,
So cried 'Keke, keke,[4] Cuckow, Queke queke hie,'
Thurgh mine eares the noise went tho.
The goos said than 'Al this nis worth a flie!
But I can shape hereof a remedie,
And wil say my verdite, faire and swithe,
For water foule, whoso be wroth or blithe.'

'And I for worm foule,' said the fole cuckow;
'For I will, of mine own authorite,
For common spede, take on me the charge now;

---

[1] See *ante*, p. 130, note 5. [2] The Cambridge MS. reads *ease*.
[3] The dispute is here called a plee, or plea, or pleading; and in the next stanza the terms of law, adopted into the Courts of Love, are still more pointedly applied.
[4] 'Keke, keke,' is an imitation of the goose's cackling, as 'cuckoo' and 'queke queke' are of the cuckoo's and duck's cries.

For, to delivere us, it is great charite.'
'Ye may abide a while yet perde,'
Quod the turtel; 'if it be youre wille
A wight may speke, it were as good be stille.'[1]

'I am a sede foule, one the unworthieste,
That wote I wel, and leest of conning;
But better is that a wightes tonge reste,
Than entremete him of such doinge
Of which he neither rede can nor singe;
And who so it doth, ful foule himself acloyeth,
For office uncommaunded[2] oft anoyeth.'

Nature, which that alway hadde an ere
To murmure of the lewednesse behinde,
With facond voice said, 'Hold your tongues there,
And I shal soone, I hope, a counsaile finde,
You to delivere, and fro this noyse unbinde:
I charge of every flock ye shal one calle,
To say the verdite of you foules alle.'

Assented were to this conclusion
The birdes alle: and foules of ravine
Have chosen first, by plaine election,
The tercelet of the faucon to define
Al hir sentence, and as him lust to termine;
And to Nature him they did presente,
And she accepteth him with glad entente.

The tercelet said than in this manere:[3]—
'Ful hard it were to preve it by reason,
Who loveth best this gentle formel here;
For everich hath such replicatioun,
That by skilles may none be brought adoun;
I cannot see that arguments availe,
Than seemeth it there must be bataile.'

---

[1] The Cambridge MS., for *it were as good*, reads, *hym were as faire*; the former has been retained as giving a better meaning.

[2] The reading of the Cambridge MS. is here followed in preference to Speght's *uncommitted*.

[3] The Cambridge MS. reads *matere*.

'Al ready!' quod these eagle tercels tho.
'Nay, sirs,' quod he, 'if that I durst it saye,
Ye do me wrong, my tale is not ydo:
For sirs, taketh nat a greefe, I praye,
It may not be as ye wolde, in this waye:
Ours is the voice that have the charge in hande,
And to the judges dome ye must stande.

'And therefore Peace! I say. As to my wit,
Me wold thinke, how that the worthiest
Of knightehood, and lengest had used it,
Most of estate, of blood the gentillest,
Were fitting for her, if that her lest;
And of these three she wote her selfe, I trowe,
Which that he be, for it is light to knowe.'

The water foules have their heades laid
Togider, and of short avisement,
Whan everiche had his[1] verdite said,
They said sothely al by one assent,
How that he goos, with the facond gent,[2]
That so desireth to pronounce our nede,
Shal telle her tale, and praid to God her spede.

And for these water foules tho began
The goose to speke, and in her cakelinge.
She said, 'Peace now, take keep every man,
And herken which a reason I shal forth bringe!
My witte is sharpe, I love no tarryinge!
I say I rede him, tho he were my brother,
But[3] she will love him, let him love another.'

'Lo! here a parfite reason of a goose!'
Quod the sperhauke. 'Never mote she the!
Lo, such a thing it is to have a tongue lose!
Now pardé, foole, yet were it better for the
Have held thy peace, than shewd thy nicete;

[1] Speght reads *this*, evidently by mistake for *his*.
[2] That is, 'With the refined eloquence,' said ironically.
[3] That is, 'Unless she will love him.'

It lieth nat in his wit, nor in his wille;
But sooth is said, a fole cannot be stille.'

The laughter arose of gentile foules alle,
And right anone the seed foules chosen hadde
The turtle true, and gan her to hem calle;
And prayed her to say the sooth sadde
Of this matter, and asked what she radde.
And she answerd, that plainly her entent
She wolde shewe, and sothely what she ment.

'Nay, God forbede a lover sholde chaunge!'
The turtle said, and wex for shame al red:
'Though that his lady evermore be straunge,
Yet let him serve her alway, til he be deed.[1]
Forsoth, I praise not the gooses reed;
For tho she died, I would none other make;
I will be hers til that the dethe me take.'

'Well ybourded,' quod the duck, 'by my hat![2]
That men should love alway causelesse,
Who can a reason finde, or wit in that?
Daunceth he mery that is mirthlesse?
Who sholde recke of that is retchlesse?
Ye! queke yet,' quod the duck, 'ful wel and faire!
There be mo sterres, God wote, than a paire.'[3]

'Now fie churle!' quod the gentle tercelet,—
'Out of the dunghille came that word aright;
Thou canst not see which thing is wel beset;
Thou farest by love as owles do by light,—
The day hem blindeth, ful wel they see by night;

[1] See *ante, Court of Love*, p. 142.

[2] The oath, 'By myn hede,' or head, often occurs in Chaucer—by my hat seems to be a ludicrous parody on it, characteristic of a vulgar person like the duck. There is also, perhaps, an allusion to the top-knot which sometimes grows on the mallard's head; or to the beautiful shining green feathers with which it is covered.

[3] That is, 'Yea, you may quack,' meaning sing or be merry, 'well and fairly; for, be assured, there are more stars than two;' meaning, you can find another mistress; like our proverb, There is as good fish in the sea as ever was caught.' Speght, for *God wote* reads *in the skie.*

Thy kind is of so lowe wretchednesse,
That what love is thou canst not se nor gesse.'

Tho gan the cuckow put him forth in preace[1]
For foule that eateth worme, and saide blive:—
'So I,' quod he, 'may have my make in peace,
I ne recche how longe that they strive.[2]
Let ech of hem be soleine[3] al hir live,
This is my rede, sens they may nat accorde;
This short lesson needeth not recorde.'

'Ye, have the glutton fillide his paunch,
Than are we wel!' saide the emerlon:[4]—
'Thou murdrer of the heysugge[5] on the braunch
That brought thee forth! thou ruful glutton!
Live thou solein, wormes corruption![6]
For no force is of lack of thy nature;[7]
Go, leude be thou while the world may dure!'

'Now peace,' quod Nature, 'I commaunde here,
For I have heard al your opinion,
And in effect yet be we never the nere;

---

[1] That is, 'Began to push himself forward in the crowd.'

[2] The reading of the Cambridge MS. has been adopted as much better than Speght's:

'I retch not how long that ye strive.'

[3] Alone, unmarried; hence *sullen*.

[4] This passage is very spirited and dramatic. The Emerlon, or Merlin, speaks at first in the person of the cuckoo, 'Yea! if the glutton have filled his paunch, then are we (meaning the cuckoo, in contempt,) satisfied.' And then, indignant at the baseness of the sentiment, analogous to that which the cuckoo has just uttered, he addresses him directly, 'Thou murderer,' &c.

[5] The heysugge is the hedge-sparrow, or fauvette, in whose nest the cuckoo generally deposits a single egg; and when the young cuckoo is hatched, being large enough to fill the nest, it throws out and kills the young hedge-sparrows. The reader will observe the beauty of this expression, 'On the braunch,' put for the nest, 'that brought thee forth.'

[6] The merlin calls the cuckoo *wormes corrupcioun*, because his food is worms.

[7] This line is rather obscure. It may mean, 'For no account is made by us, we do not care, for your want of natural affection.'

But finally, this is my conclusion,—
That she her selfe shall have her election
Of whom her list, who so be wrothe or blithe;
Him that she cheseth, he shall her have as swithe.

'For sith it may not here discussed be
Who loveth her best, as said the tercelet,
Than wol I done this favour to her, that she
Shal have right him on whom her herte is set;
And he her, that his herte hath on her knet:
This judge I, Nature, for I may not lie
To none estate, I have none other eye.

'But as for counsaile for to chuse a make,
If I were reason,[1] thanne wolde I
Counsaile you the ryal tercel take,
As said the tercelet,[2] ful skilfully,
As for the gentillest, and most worthy,
Which I have wroght so wel to my plesaunce,
That to you it ought ben a suffisaunce.'

With dredeful[3] voice that formel her answerd:—
'My rightful lady, goddess of Nature,
Soth is, that I am ever under your yerd,[4]
As is everich other creature,
And must be yours while my life may dure;
And therefore graunte me my firste boone,
And mine entent you woll I say right soone.'

'I graunt it you,' quod she, and right anone
This formel eagle spake in this degree:—
'Almighty quene, unto this year be done

[1] The meaning of this line, as it stands, would be, 'If I were Reason,' meaning the Goddess Reason, 'I would counsel you,' &c. But the true reading is probably, 'If it were reason,' that is, 'If it were resonable.'

[2] The Cambridge MS. for *the tercelet*, reads *Nature*, which would make the passage unintelligible.

[3] Dredeful here means 'full of dread,' not, as with us, causing dread.

[4] See vol. iii., p. 95, note 2.

I aske respite for to avisen mee;
And after that to have my choice al free;
This all and some that I would spek and seye;
Ye get no more, although ye do me deye.

'I wol not serven Venus ne Cupide,
Forsooth as yet, by no manner waye.'
'Now sens it may none other wayes betide,'
Quod Nature, 'here is no more to saye:
Than wold I that these foules were awaye,
Ech with his make, for tarying lenger here.'
And said hem thus, as ye shal after here.

'To you speke I, ye tercelets,' quod Nature;
'Beth of good herte, and serveth alle three;
A yeare is not so longe[1] to endure,
And ech of you paine him in his degree
For to do welle; for, God wote, quit is she
Fro you this year, what after so befalle;
This entremes[2] is dressed for you all.'

And whan this werk brought was to an end,
To every foule Nature yave his make
By even accord, and on hir way they wend:
And, Lord! the blisse and joye that they make!
For ech of hem gan other in his winges take,
And with hir neckes ech gan other winde,
Thanking alway the noble goddess of kinde.

But first were chosen foules for to singe,—
As yere by yere was alway hir usaunce,
To sing a roundel at hir departinge,
To do Nature honour and pleasaunce;
The note, I trow, maked was in Fraunce;

[1] Speght reads *long*, which is both metrically and grammatically incorrect, *longe* being the adverbial form. But in his text grammatical inflections are throughout disregarded.

[2] An *entremet*, or as it is here spelt, *entremes*, is a small dish brought in, as its name implies, between the more substantial viands, and generally something very dainty. Nature says playfully, This decision, which obliges you to wait for a year, is a dainty morsel for you to enjoy in the interval.

The wordes were such as ye may here finde
The next verse, as I now have in mind.
Qui bien ayme tard oublye.[1]

'Now welcome summer, with thy sunnes softe,
That hast this winter weatheres overshake;
Saint Valentine, thou art ful high on lofte,
Which drivest away the longe nightes blake;—
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake—
Wel have they cause for to gladen ofte,
Sens each of hem recovered hath his make,
Ful blisful may they singe whan they awake.'

And with the shouting whan hir song was do,
That the foules made at hir flight away,
I woke, and other bookes took me to
To rede upon; and yet I rede alway.
I hope ywis to rede so some day,
That I shall mete something for to fare
The bet, and thus to rede I nil not spare.

EXPLICIT.

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[1] Though the conclusion of this poem is somewhat similar to that of *The Court of Love*, it differs in two important details: in *The Court of Love* the birds sing a religious service to the God of Love; here they sing a roundel in thanksgiving to Nature. The motto or refrain of the song, Qui bien aime, tard oublye, He who loves well does not soon forget, gives, as it were, the keynote of the whole poem, the object of which is to show, that where all profess equal love the criterion must be constancy.

OF THE CUCKOW AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

[The text here given of this charming little poem is mainly founded on that of Speght, corrected from collations with the MS. marked Ff. 1. 6, in the University Library, at Cambridge. Wherever various readings occur, they will be found in the notes. For these collations, the editor has again to acknowledge his obligations to his friend, Mr. Halliwell.

The poem is of the same school as *The Court of Love*, *The Assembly of Foules*, and *The Flower and the Leaf;* and displays to great advantage the grace and elegance of Chaucer's mind, his playful fancy and tender feeling. It comprehends, in a small compass, most of the characteristics of the Provençal poets,—gallantry of sentiment, sweetness of expression, and subtlety of argument. It possesses an additional interest from its illustrations of the customs of May, and some of the superstitions connected with birds. The evil omens associated with the note of the cuckoo, when first heard in the morning, are employed to enhance the odium of the part he takes in the controversy against love, and the character usually assigned to him as the representative of sensual profligacy.

The subject may be thus briefly described. After an introduction, in which the poet extols the universal power of love, he tells us that, being unable to sleep, he rose at day-break one morning in May, to hear the nightingale sing, and wandered through a wood by the margin of a brook, till he came to a green lawn, powdered with daisies. Lulled by the sound of the running water and the songs of the birds, he falls into a half-waking dream; when he thinks he hears the ominous note of the cuckoo, whom the nightingale, from a neighbouring bush, immediately begs to go somewhere away that he may not interrupt those who really can sing. Then ensues a dispute between them on the merits of love. Here, as in *The Assembly of Foules*, the cuckoo represents profligate celibacy, and the nightingale pure conjugal affection.

The poet, whose indignation is roused by the base sentiments of the cuckoo, at last starts up and drives him off; upon which the nightingale thanks Chaucer, and promises to sing him one of her newest songs. She then calls the other birds, and they consult together how to be avenged on the cuckoo for his slanders against love; when it is finally agreed that they shall hold a parliament on the morrow of St. Valentine, before the Queen's window in Woodstock Park. The nightingale then sings so loud a song that she awakens the poet, who, in the *Envoye*, dedicates his book to his lady.

The ballad of three stanzas, with the *Envoye*, which concludes the poem in the printed editions, is not found in all the MSS. In the MS. Fairf. 16, it is transferred to the end of *The Boke of the Duchesse*, and in MS. Bod. 638, it does not appear at all. Tyrwhitt thinks that it was not written by Chaucer, an opinion which is fairly open to revision. The ballad would seem to have a more special propriety in reference to *The Cuckow and the Nightingale*, on account of its theme and its moral, than to *The Boke of the Duchesse*, which treats of a wholly different subject.

The metre of the poem is peculiar, and is the only example of the kind amongst the varieties employed by Chaucer. The stanzas consist of five lines, of which the first, second, and fifth fall into one rhyme, and the third and fourth into another. The lines are generally formed of five iambic feet, but often of only four. Indeed, the measure, although by no means unmusical, is more irregular than that of almost any other of the minor poems.]

THE god of love, ah! benedicite,
How mighty and how gret a lord is he![1]
For he can make of lowe hertes hie,
And of high low, and like for to die,
And harde hertes he can maken free.

[1] These two lines occur before in *The Knightes Tale*, and are there spoken by Theseus. See vol. i. p. 145. From them we are enabled to correct the reading of Speght, *And benedicite*, which is unintelligible.

He can make, within a little stounde,
Of sicke folke hole, freshe, and sounde,
And of hole he can make seke;
He can binde, and unbinden eke,
That he wol have bounden or unbounde.

To telle his might my wit may not suffice,
For he can make of wise folke ful nice,[1]—
For he may do al that he woll devise,—
And lither[2] folk to destroyen vice,
And proude hertes he can make agrise.

Shortely al that ever he wol he may,
Against him dare no wight saye nay;
For he can gladde and greve whom him liketh,[3]
And who that he wol, he lougheth or siketh,
And most his might he shedeth ever in May.[4]

For every true gentle herte free,
That with him is, or thinketh for to be,
Againe May now shal have some stering,
Or to joye, or elles to some mourning,
In no season so muche, as thinketh me.

For whan they may here the birds singe,
And see the floures and the leaves springe,
That bringeth into hertes[5] remembraunce
A manner ease, medled with grevaunce,
And lustie thoughts fulle of great longinge.

And of that longinge commeth hevinesse,
And thereof groweth grete sicknesse,

---

[1] *Nice* here means foolish, from the French, *niais*.

[2] *Lither* or *luther* meant originally slothful; hence bad in general.

[3] *Liketh* is here, and generally in Chaucer and his successors, down to the eighteenth century, an impersonal verb; it liketh me, means, I like it.

[4] See vol. i. p. 121, note 2.

[5] Speght reads *hir*. *Hertes*, which is taken from the Cambridge MS., is infinitely more expressive and poetical; because it intimates that the recollections which the return of May awakens proceed from the feelings, and not from the reason.

And[1] for lacke of that that they desire:
And thus in May ben hertes set on fire,
So that they brennen forth in great distresse.

I speake this of feeling trewly;[2]
If I be old and unlusty,
Yet I have felt the sicknesse thurgh May
Both hote and colde, an[3] accesse every day,
How sore, ywis, there wote no wight but I.

I am so shaken with the fevers white,[4]
Of all this May sleepe I but a lite;
And also it is not like to me
That any herte sholde sleepy be,
In whom that Love his firy dart wol smite.

But as I lay this other night wakinge,
I thought how lovers had a tokeninge,
And among hem it was a commune tale,
That it were good to here the nightingale,
Rather than the leud cuckow singe.

And than I thought anon, as it was daye,
I wolde go some where to assaye
If that I might a nightingale here;
For yet had I none herd of al that yere,
And it was tho the thirde night of May.

And anone as I the day aspide,
No lenger would I in my bed abide;

[1] *And for lacke*, &c., does not suggest a very satisfactory sense. The true reading is, perhaps, *All for lacke*.

[2] That is, I speak from experience of what I myself have felt.

[3] Speght reads, *and accesse*,—Urry, *and axis*. The reading in the text is from the Cambridge MS. The meaning of the passage is, I have felt this sickness, which, like an attack (accesse) of fever or ague, now makes me hot, now cold, now full of hope, now sunk in despondency. See *Knightes Tale*, vol. i. p. 137:—

> 'As doth thes lovers in here queynte geeres,
> Now in the croppe, now doun in the breres,
> Now up, now doun, as boket in a welle.'

[4] This malady would seem to be the 'green and yellow melancholy' of Shakspeare.—*Twelfth Night*, Act ii., Sc. 4.

But unto a wood that was fast by,
I went forth alone boldely,
And held the way downe by a brooke side.

'Til I came to a laund of white and green,
So faire one hadde I never in been;
The ground was green, ypoudred[1] with daisie,
The floures and the greves like hie,[2]
All greene and white, was nothing elles seen.

There sat I downe among the faire floures,
And sawe the birdes trippe out of hir boures,
There as they rested hem alle the night;
They were so joyful of the dayes light,
They began of May for to done honoures.[3]

They coude that service al by rote;[4]
There was many a lovely note!
Some songe loud as they had plained,
And some in other manner voice yfained,[5]
And some al oute with the fulle throte.

They proyned hem, and maden hem right gay,
And daunceden and lepten on the spray;
And evermore two and two in fere,
Right so as they had chosen hem to-yere[6]
In Feverere upon saint Valentines day.

And the rivere that I sate upon,
It made such a noise as it ron,

[1] This is an heraldic term, meaning that certain figures are thickly scattered over some colour; as, for instance, a coat of arms might be described as *azure*, powdered with stars, *or*.

[2] That is, the flowers and leaves were of the same height, which gave the lawn the appearance of being powdered with the flowers.

[3] Thus, in *The Court of Love*, and *The Assembly of Foules*, the birds are represented as worshipping Nature, or the God of Love.

[4] They knew the service all by heart, so as to be able to sing it to an accompaniment on the rote—a violin with three strings.

[5] The distinction between the loud singing of some, and the 'manner voice yfained' of others, seems to mean that some sang with their natural, and others with a falsetto, voice.

[6] *To yere* means this year, as to-day means this day. The expression is still common in Yorkshire.

Accordaunt with the birdes armony,
Me thought it was the best melody
That might ben yheard of any mon.

And for delite, I wote never how,
I fell in such a slomber and a swow,[1]—
Nat all asleepe, ne fully waking,—
And in that swow me thought I hearde sing
The sorry bird, the leud cuckow,

And that was on a tree right fast by.
But who was than evill apaid but I?
'Now God,' quod I, 'that died on the crois,
Yeve sorrow on thee, and on thy leud vois![2]
Full little joy have I now of thy cry.'

And as I with the cuckow thus gan chide,
I heard, in the next bush beside,
A nightingale so lustely sing,
That her[3] clere voice she made ring
Thurgh all the greene wood wide.

'Ah, good nightingale,' quod I then,
'A little hast thou ben too long hen;[4]
For here hath ben the leud cuckow,
And songen songs rather[5] than hast thou:
I pray to God evill fire her[6] bren!'

But now I wol you tell a wonder thing:—
As long as I lay in that swouning,

---

[1] *Swow* means *swoon*, or, as Chaucer would write the word, *swound*, and is not to be confounded with *swough*, a confused noise.—See *ante*, p. 198, note 3.

[2] See vol. iii., p. 244.

[3] Speght reads, *with her clere*, &c., which makes the passage ungrammatical, there being no accusative case to the active verb, *made*.

[4] That is, *hence*.

[5] *Rather* is here used in its original meaning, *earlier*, *sooner*, being the comparative degree of *rathe*, early, soon. It is used by Milton in this sense, as the 'rathe primrose.'

[6] The Cambridge MS. reads *hym*, but Chaucer speaks of all birds in the feminine, as the vulgar do still.

Me thought I wist what the birds ment,
And what they said, and what was hir entent,
And of hir speech I had good knowing.

'There heard I the nightingale say:—
'Now, good cuckow, go somewhere away,
And let us that can singen dwellen here;
For every wight escheweth thee to here,
Thy songs be so elenge, in good fay.'

'What,' quod she, 'what may thee aylen now?
It thinketh[1] me, I sing as well as thou,
For my song is both true and plaine,[2]
Al though[3] I cannot crakel so in vaine,
As thou dost in thy throte, I wot never how.

'And every wight may understande mee,
But, Nightingale, so may they not done thee,
For thou hast many a nice queint cry;
I have thee heard saine, 'ocy, ocy;'[4]
How might I know what that should be?'

'Ah foole,' quod she, 'wost thou not what it is?
Whan that I say, ocy, ocy, ywis,
Than meane I that I would wonder faine,
That all they were shamefully yslaine,
That meanen ought againe love amis.

'And also I would that all tho were dede,
That thinke not in love hir life to lede,

---

[1] Chaucer often uses *it thinketh* as an impersonal verb, like *it liketh*; this form is retained in *methinks*, *i. e.*, it thinks me

[2] Thus, in Shakespeare, the cuckoo is called the 'plain-song cuckoo,' in allusion to the *planus cantus* or *canto fermo* of the church-service, in which, as in the cuckoo's note, there is very little inflection.

[3] Speght reads *And*, which is evidently a clerical error for *Al*.

[4] Parts of the nightingale's song are supposed to resemble the word *ocy*, which is somewhat like the Latin word *occidere*, to slay; and therefore the nightingale explains it to mean, 'I wish that all who think anything amiss of love, or who will not serve the God of Love, were *slain*.'

For who so that wol not the god of love serve,
I dare wel saye he is worthy to sterve;
And for that skille, ocy, ocy, I grede.'

'Eye!' quod the cuckow, 'this is a queint lawe,
That every wight shal love or be to-drawe![1]
But I forsake alle such companie;
For mine entent is not for to die,
Ne never while I live on Loves yoke to drawe.[2]

'For loveres ben the folke that ben on live,
That most disease have, and most unthrive,
And most endure sorwe, wo, and care,
And least feelen of welfare:
What needeth it ayenst trouth to strive?'

'What?' quod she, 'thou art out of thy minde!
How might thou in thy churlenesse finde
To speake of Loves servauntes in this wise?
For in this world is none so good servise
To every wight that gentle is of kinde;

'For thereof truly commeth alle gladnesse,[3]
Alle honoure and all gentlenesse,
Worship, ease, and alle hertes lust,
Parfite joy, and ful assured trust,
Jolitie, pleasaunce, and freshnesse,

'Lowlyhead, largesse, and curtesie,
Semelyhead, and true companie,
Drede of shame for to done amis:
For he that truly Loves servaunt is,
Were lother be shamed than to die.

---

[1] The rhyme would be improved by reading, instead of *draw, slaw* for slain; but, as there is no MS. authority for it, Speght's reading has been retained in the text.

[2] That is, Never while I live to draw love's yoke on—*i. e.*, to put it on.

[3] Speght reads *goodnesse;* but *gladnesse*, the reading of the Cambridge MS., is better, as being a more direct contradiction to what the cuckoo has just said.

'And that this is sothe that I seye,
In that beleeve I wil live and deye,
And, Cuckow, so I rede that thou do ywis.'
'Than,' quod he, 'let me never have blisse,
If ever I unto that counsaile obeye!

'Nightingale, thou speakest wonder faire,
But, for al that, is the sooth contraire;
For love is in yong folk but rage,
And in olde folk a great dotage,
Who most it useth, most shalle enpaire.

'For thereof cometh disease and hevinesse,
Sorow[1] and care, and many a grete sicknesse,
Despite, debate, anger, and envie,
Depravinge, shame, untrust, and jelousie,
Pride, mischeefe, poverte, and woodnesse.

'Lovinge is an office of despaire,
And one thing is therein that is not faire;
For who that getteth of love a little blisse,
But if he be alway therewith ywis,
He may ful soone of age have his haire.[2]

'And, Nightingale, therefore hold thee nie;
For, leve me wel, for al thy queint crie,
If thou be fer or longe fro thy make,
Thou shalt be as other that been forsake,
And than thou shalt hoten as doe I.'[3]

'Fie,' quod she, 'on thy name and on thee!
The god of love ne let thee never ythe!

---

[1] Speght reads *So sorrow*; but this is so evidently a mistake of the copyist that the *so* has been omitted.

[2] This passage is rather obscure; but the meaning seems to be, 'He may full soon have the hair which belongs to age,' *scil.*, grey hair, said to be produced by anxiety.

[3] That is, 'You shall be called as I am.'—See vol. 1, p. 150, note 3.

For thou art worse a thousand fold than wood,
For many a one is full worthy and full good,
That had be naught,[1] ne had love ybe.

'For evermore Love his servantes amendeth,
And from alle evile taches hem defendeth,
And maketh hem to brenne right in a fire,
In trouth and in worshipful desire,
And, whan him liketh, joy inough hem sendeth.'

'Thou Nightingale,' he said, 'be stille!
For Love hath no reason but hys wille;[2]
For oft time untrue folke he easeth,
And true folk so biterly he displeaseth,
That for default of grace[3] he let hem spille.

Than tooke I of the nightingale keepe,
How she cast a sigh out of her deepe,[4]
And said, 'Alas, that ever I was bore!
I can for tene not say one word more;'
And right with that word she brast out to weepe.

'Alas!' quod she, 'my herte wol to-breke
To heren thus this leud bird speke
Of Love, and of his worshipful servise.
Now, God of Love, thou help me in some wise,
That I may on this cuckow been awreke.'

Methought thanne I stirte up anon,
And to the broke I ranne and gate a ston,

---

[1] That is, 'Many a one is full worthy and good who would have been good for nothing if love had not existed.'

[2] Speght reads *but it is*, which is not nearly so good as the reading of the Cambridge MS., which is here adopted. The meaning is, 'Love is not governed by reason, but by will or impulse.'

[3] *Grace*, which is the reading of the Cambridge MS., is much better than *courage*, which is Speght's. The meaning is, 'Love often sends ease to those who do not deserve it, and suffers those who are worthy to fail for want of his favour or grace.'

[4] *Deepe* is here an adverb, and therefore has the final *e*.

And to the cokkowe hertely caste;
And for drede he flyes away ful faste,
And glad was I whan that he was gon.

And evermore the cokkowe, as he flay,
He seyd, 'Farewele, farewele papejay!'
As though he had scorned, thought me;
But ay I huntyd hym fro the tre,
Til he was fer oute of syght away.[1]

And than came the nightingale to mee,
And said, 'Friend, forsooth I thanke thee,
That thou hast liked me to rescow;
And one avow to love make I now,
That all this May I wol thy singer be.'

'I thanked her, and was right wel apaied:
'Ye,' quod she, 'and be thou not dismaied,
Tho thou have herd the cuckow erst than me;
For, if I live, it shall amended be
The next May, if I be not affraied.[2]

'And one thing I wol rede thee also,
Ne leve[3] thou not the cuckow, the loves fo,[4]

---

[1] Instead of the two last stanzas, which are absolutely necessary for the sense, Speght and all the printed editions have the following:—

'Methought than he stert up anone,
And glad was I that he was agone,
And evermore the cuckow, as he flay,
Said, 'Farewell, farewell, popingay,
As though he had scorned me alone.'

[2] It was considered ominous to hear the cuckoo before the nightingale,—see *ante*, p. 220,—or any other bird, on first going out in the morning; and the number of times he repeated his notes indicated the number of years the person who heard him had to live.

[3] *Leve* here means *believe*.

[4] For '*the loves fo*,' which is the reading of the Cambridge MS., Speght and the other printed editions read *ne his loves so*, which is unintelligible. The construction of the sentence is 'the foe of love'—the definite article agrees with *fo*, not *loves*.

For al that he hath said is strong lesinge.'
'Nay,' quod I, 'thereto shal nothing me bringe,
For love and it hath doe me much wo.[1]

'Ye? Use,' quod she, 'this medicine,
Every day this May or thou dine:—
Go looke upon the fresh daisie,[2]
And, though thou be for wo in point to die,
That shal ful greatly lessen thee of thy pine.

'And looke alway that thou be good and trewe,
And I wol singe one of my[3] songes newe
For love of thee, as loud as I may crie:'
And than she began this song ful hie,
'I shrewe alle hem that been of love untrewe.'

And whan she had songe it to the ende,
'Now farewel,' quod she, 'for I mote wende,
And, God of Love, that can right wel and may,
As much joy send thee this day,
As any lover yet he ever sende!'

Thus taketh the nightingale her leave of me.
I pray to God alway with her be,
And joy of love he send her evermore,
And shilde us fro the cuckow and his lore,
For there is not so false a bird as he.

Forth she flew, the gentle nightingale,
To all the birdes that were in that dale,
And gate hem alle into a place in fere,
And besoughten hem that they would here
Her disease, and thus began her tale.

---

[1] This line is obscure. It does not appear what the pronoun *it* refers to. It may possibly refer to the cuckoo.

[2] Chaucer's predilection for this flower has been already remarked, *ante*, p. 133.

[3] Speght reads *the*.

'Ye wyten welle,[1] it is not for to hide,
How the cuckow and I faste have chide,
Ever sithen it was day light;
I pray you alle that ye do me right
On that foule false unkind bridde.'

Than spake o bird for alle, by one assent:—
'This matter asketh good avisement;
For we ben fewe[2] birdes here in fere,
And sooth it is, the cuckow is not here,
And therefore we wol have a parlement.[3]

'And thereat shal the egle be our lord,
And other peres that been of record,[4]
And the cuckow shal be after sent;
There shal be yeve the judgement,
Or els we shalle finally make accord.

'And this shal be, withouten nay,
The morrow after saint Valentines day,
Under a maple that is faire and grene,
Before the chamber window of the Quene,[5]
At Woodstocke upon the grene lay.'

---

[1] For *ye wyten*; Speght and the printed editions read *the cuckoo*, which makes the passage unintelligible.

[2] Speght reads *fewe*.

[3] This expression connects this poem with *The Assembly of Foules*, called also in the Bodleian MS. *The Parlement of Briddes*, and with *The Court of Love*.—See Introduction to *Court of Love*.

[4] The Cambridge MS. reads *of o record*; but *of record* seems better, because the Courts of Love affected the terms of the Courts of Law; and 'a court of record' is a legal term, and means, a court whose proceedings are recorded. *Peres that ben of record* would mean, Peers whose titles and offices are recorded and authentic.

[5] The Queen here mentioned is probably Philippa, wife of Edward III., who may have been residing at Woodstock at this time. The poem is dedicated by Chaucer, in the envoye, to his lady; and it seems not unreasonable to suppose that this lady was Philippa Roet, who afterwards became his wife, and who was one of the maids of honour attendant on the Queen.—See vol. i. p. 16. This would account for the nightingale's placing the scene of the proposed 'Parlement of Briddes' in front of the Queen's windows, whence her maid of honour, Chaucer's lady,

She thanked hem, and than her leave toke,
And into an hauthorne by that broke,[1]
And there she sate and song upon that tree,
'Terme of life love hath withhold me,'[2]
So loud that I with that song awoke.

EXPLICIT.

O LEUD book! with thy foule rudenesse,
Sith thou hast neither beauty ne eloquence,
Who hath thee caused or yeve the hardinesse
For to appere in my ladies presence?
I am ful siker thou knowest her benevolence,
Full agreeable to al her abyinge,
For of al good she is the best livinge.

Alas! that thou ne haddest worthinesse,
To shew to her some pleasaunt sentence,
Sith that she hath, thurgh her gentillesse,
Accepted thee servant[3] to her digne reverence!
O! me repenteth that I ne had science,
And leiser als, to make thee more flourishinge,
For of al good she is the best livinge.

Beseche her meekely with al lowlinesse,
Though I be ferre from her in absence,
To thinke on my trouth to her and stedfastnesse,
And to abridge of my sorrowes the violence,
Which caused is,[4] wherof knoweth your sapience,

---

might witness the proceedings. It would also fix the date of this poem at some period before the year 1360, the probable date of the poet's marriage, unless, indeed, the poem be thought more applicable to a married than to a single lady.

[1] It will be observed that in this sentence there is no verb; it is the form of a common idiom; as in the Bible, Up, Lord, for rise up.

[2] That is, Love has held possession of me for the term of all my life.

[3] That is, Accepted thee to be servant, &c.

[4] That is, Which is caused by what your wisdom knows.

She like[1] among to notifie me her likinge;
For of al good she is the best livinge.

LENVOYE.

AURORE of gladnesse, and day of lustinesse,
Lucern[2] a night with heavenly influence
Illumined, rote of beauty and goodnesse,
Suspires which I effunde in silence![3]
Of grace I beseche alledge let your writinge[4]
Now of al good sith ye be best livinge.

EXPLICIT.

---

[1] That is, May she like.

[2] This is a Latin word, signifying lamp. It is one of a large class of Latin words used in the middle ages, which have become obsolete.

[3] The meaning appears to be, What suspires, or sighs, do I pour out in silence.

[4] Meaning, I beseech you, of grace, let your writing now alledge, or affirm, that which is good, or favourable to me.

THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF.

[THIS poem was first published by Speght, in his edition of 1597. Chaucer himself mentions it among his works in the *Legende of Gode Women;* but no MS. of it is known to be in existence. The internal as well as the external evidence of its genuineness is conclusive, but unfortunately the text bears many marks of being very much corrupted. The spelling has evidently been adapted to that of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the Elizabethan editor, who, it is to be feared, has taken still greater liberties with his author, to the extent of making many important verbal alterations. Some sentences will be observed to be weak and ungrammatical, faults which those who have compared the printed texts of such poems as exist in MS. with the MSS. themselves, find to be always attributable to the carelessness and ignorance of the early editors, and not to the obsoleteness or inaccuracy of the poet's language. The present editor, however, has not felt himself at liberty to make any radical or sweeping changes; but wherever it was practicable, and could be reverted to with safety, he has adopted the ancient forms, in preference to the cumbrous and capricious orthography of the Elizabethan times.

The poem itself is in that peculiar style of allegory brought into fashion in the eleventh and twelfth centuries by the Provençal troubadours. Dryden, in his preface to the *Fables*, thus speaks of it:—'Besides these, there is another of his own invention, after the manner of the Provençals, called *The Flower and the Leaf*, with which I was so particularly pleased, both for the invention and the moral, that I cannot hinder myself from recommending it to the reader.' Tyrwhitt, indeed, is strongly of opinion that Chaucer derived no inspiration from the Provençal school. He says, 'I have not observed in any of his writings a single phrase or word, which has the least appearance of having been fetched from the South of the Loire. With respect to

the manner and matter of his compositions, till some clear instance of imitation be produced, I shall be slow to believe that in either he ever copied the poets of Provence; with whose works, I apprehend, he had very little, if any acquaintance.'—Vol. i. Appendix Pref. p. xxxvi. To this Warton replies, 'I have advanced the contrary doctrine, at least by implication: and I here beg leave to explain myself on a subject materially affecting the system of criticism that has been formed on Chaucer's works. I have never affirmed that Chaucer imitated the Provençal bards; although it is by no means improbable that he might have known their tales. But as the peculiar nature of the Provençal poetry entered deeply into the substance, cast, and character of some of those French and Italian models which he is allowed to have followed, he certainly may be said to have copied, although not immediately, the matter and manner of these writers.'—WARTON, *Hist. Engl. Poet.*, sect. xviii.

If the *Courts of Love* were of Provençal origin, there can be little doubt that Warton's views are correct. But is it possible that a court like that of Edward III. should not have been visited by any of the troubadours? Is it possible that a man of Chaucer's inquiring mind, who had visited not only the English dominions in France, but the courts of French princes, and who was himself well-known in the literary world of his own day, should never have met with a troubadour or any of the troubadours' works, at a period also when the republic of letters was so small that almost all its citizens were known to each other? The internal evidence is also strongly in favour of Warton's views. Allegorical poetry is not peculiar to any time or people. It is the form in which all poetry, particularly in its earlier stages, delights to clothe itself. The authors of the sacred poems in the Old Testament, Homer, Euripides, Virgil, Lucretius, every poet who ever wrote or sung, employs it more or less. But in the bright and sunny colouring of Chaucer's allegories, their minute descriptions of splendid processions of knights and ladies, their lavish use of flowers and birds, and their general

air of festive and courteous gallantry, we cannot fail to recognise the spirit of the 'gay science' which contrived the *plaids sous l'ormel*, and the erotic Tensons. There is something in these pictures of the festivities of the European courts of this period which seizes vividly upon the imagination. How unlike our modern levees and ball-rooms, from which we retire asking ourselves, 'Is this pleasure?' or our re-unions in a country house, where bagging so many brace of grouse employs the day, and, at best, acting charades, the night. How free and enjoyable must have been these meetings, where ladies and gentlemen spent the summer's day acting love legislation, under the shade of a spreading elm! What a field for wit and fancy in their half-serious, half-comic metaphysical disquisitions on the various forms of love, and the duties and pains of lovers! What an opportunity for the display of grace and elegance in their mock fights on horseback! The whole spirit of these festivities belongs to a former age. The mind of the nineteenth century is so occupied with the solution of the grave problems of social life, that its very amusements have the appearance of a solemn business, in which all freedom of thought and exuberance of natural spirits are cramped and repressed.

The poem, as usual, opens with a description of spring. The circumstances are supposed to be related by a lady, who, unable to sleep, rises at the springing of the day; and walking down an unfrequented path arrives at a delightful arbour. From a medlar tree which grows beside it, a goldfinch begins to sing, and is answered by a nightingale from a laurel. As she sits listening to the song of the birds, she is surprised by the sound of many voices of ladies singing, whom she presently sees issuing from a grove with chaplets on their heads, some of laurel, some of Agnus castus, others of woodbind. One, who from her dress and bearing she supposes to be the Queen, sings a roundel, beginning, *Suse le foyle devers moy, siene et mon joly couer est endormy*, in which the rest all join, and advance dancing and singing.

Presently she hears the noise of 'thundering trumps;' and nine knights in arms, preceded by trumpeters, heralds, pursuivants, and followed by a numerous retinue of knights and attendants, issue from the same grove, wearing chaplets of laurel, oak, hawthorn, and woodbind. Suddenly they wheel their horses round, divide into two companies, lay their lances in the rests, and begin to joust. When they have jousted for an hour, they alight from their horses, and advance by two and two towards the ladies, who break off their dance and come to meet them. Each lady takes a knight by the hand, and leads him to a spreading laurel, to which they all make a low reverence.

She then sees a company of knights and ladies, dressed in green, coming from the open country with chaplets of flowers on their heads, and preceded by minstrels. These do reverence to a tuft of flowers, and their Queen sings, in praise of the daisy, a bargaret, or pastoral song, which begins, *Si douce est la Marguerite.*

About noon the heat of the sun becomes oppressive; the flowers are all 'forshronk,' withered with the heat, and the ladies 'to-brent.' Presently a violent storm of wind, hail, and rain arises, beats down the flowers, drenches the knights and ladies in green, and leaves them in a pitiful plight; while those in white, who have remained under the shelter of the laurel, escape.

The Queen and ladies in white then comfort those in green, and heal their blisters with salves made of wholesome herbs, while the knights with their swords cut down branches of trees, and make a blazing fire to dry their clothes; and at the invitation of the Queen in white they all return to sup with her.

As they pass along, the nightingale, which sat in the laurel, perches on the hand of the Queen in white; and the goldfinch, which sat in the medlar, on the hand of her in green.

The lady who relates the story then meets with a lady riding alone, who explains to her the import of the allegory.

The Queen in white is Diana. Those who wore chaplets of Agnus castus are they who have preserved their chastity; those who wore laurel, they who have done valiant things; those who wore woodbind are they who have been true and steadfast in love. The nine knights are the Nine Worthies; those who wore laurel, the Knights of the Round Table, the douseperis, (*douze pairs,*) or twelve peers, of Charlemagne, and the Knights of the Garter—a compliment to Edward III., who had just founded that Order.

The Queen in green is Flora, and all her train are they who loved sloth and idleness.

The flower represents sloth and vain pleasure, because, as Speght in his argument quaintly expresses it, 'it is a thing fading with every blast;' the leaf, virtue and industry, because 'it abides with the root, notwithstanding the frosts and winter storms.'

In the poem there is no explanation of the emblematical import of the medlar tree, the goldfinch, and the nightingale. But as the fruit of the medlar, to use Chaucer's own expression (see *Prologue to Reeve's Tale*), is rotten before it is ripe, it may be the emblem of sensual pleasure, which palls before it confers real enjoyment. The goldfinch is remarkable for the beauty of its plumage, the sprightliness of its movements, and its gay, tinkling song, and may be supposed to represent the showy and unsubstantial character of frivolous pleasures. The nightingale's sober outward appearance and impassioned song denote greater depth of feeling.

In Gower's *Confessio Amantis* the flower and the leaf are used to express the same allegorical meaning; but it is now difficult, if not impossible, to determine which of the poets has the merit of originating the idea. Warton supposes that most of Chaucer's minor poems are prior to the *Confessio Amantis*, and does not hesitate to express his belief that the allegory in which the following passage is found is imitated from *The Floure and the Leafe.* It is possible, however, that both poets may be indebted for this pretty fancy to some nameless troubadour.

Myn eie I caste all aboutes,
To knowe amonge hem who was who:
I sigh where lustie Youth tho,
As he which was a capitayne
Before all others on the playne,
Stode with his route well begon:
Her heades kempt, and thereupon
Garlondes, not of one colour,
Some of the *lefe*, some of the *floure*, &c.

No unimportant element of beauty in Chaucer's poetry is the elevated tone of moral feeling which pervades it, notwithstanding the occasional grossnesses of expression which belong to the age rather than to the man. There is not a single piece of his which, on the whole, does not tend to excite to admiration of virtue, and to make vice hateful or ridiculous.]

WHAN that Phebus his chair of gold so hie
Had whirled up the sterry sky alofte,
And in the Boole[1] was entred certainly:
When shoures sweet of raine descended softe,
Causing the ground, fele times and ofte,
Up for to give many an wholsome aire,
And every plaine was yclothed faire

With newe greene, and maketh smale floures
To springen here and there in fielde and mede;
So very good and wholsome be the shoures,
That it renueth that was olde and dede
In winter time; and out of every sede
Springeth the herbe, so that every wight
Of this season wexeth glad and light.

And I, so glad of the season swete,
Was happed thus upon a certaine night:—
As I lay in my bedde, sleepe ful unmete
Was unto me, but why that I ne might
Rest, I ne wist; for there nas earthly wight,
As I suppose, had more hertes ease
Than I, for I nad sicknesse nor disease.

[1] The sun enters Taurus in May.

Wherefore I mervaile greatly of my selfe,
That I so long withouten sleepe lay;
And up I rose three houres after twelfe,
About the springing of the day;
And on I put my geare and mine array,
And to a pleasaunt grove I gan passe,
Long er the bright Sunne up risen was;

In which were okes grete, streight as a line,
Under the which the grasse, so fresh of hewe,
Was newly sprong; and an eight foot or nine
Every tree wel fro his fellow grew,
With branches brode, laden with leves newe,
That sprongen out ayen the sunne shene,
Some very redde,[1] and some a glad light grene;

Which, as me thought, was right a pleasant sight;
And eke the briddes songe for to here
Would have rejoiced any earthly wight;
And I that couth not yet, in no manere,
Heare the nightingale of al the yeare,
Ful busily herkened with herte and eare,
If I her voice perceive coud any where.

And, at the last, a path of little brede
I found, that greatly had not used be;
For it forgrowen was with grasse and weede,
That wel unneth a wighte might it se:
Thought I, 'This path some whider goth, parde!'
And so I followed, till it me brought
To right a pleasaunt herber,[2] well ywrought,

[1] The young leaves of the oak, when they first burst from the bud, are of a red, cinereous colour.

[2] *Herber* might at first sight seem to be derived from the Latin *herbarium*, a garden; but it is really the same as *herberwe*, a word of Saxon origin, meaning a lodging. It was especially applied to the thick part of the wood where the hart made his lair; whence the technical term, 'to unharbour the deer.' It was thence applied to any apartment formed by art of trees thickly planted and interlaced. Our words arbour and harbour belong to the same root.

That benched was, and with turfes newe
Freshly turved,[1] whereof the grene gras,
So smale, so thicke, so short, so fresh of hewe,
That most like unto grene wool, wot I, it was:
The hegge also that yede in compas,
And closed in al the greene herbere,
With sicamour was set and eglatere,

Wrethen in fere so wel and cunningly,
That every branch and leafe grew by mesure,
Plaine as a bord, of an height by and by.
I see never thing, I you ensure,
So wel done; for he that tooke the cure
It to make, y trow did all his peine
To make it passe alle tho that men have seine.

And shapen was this herber, roofe and alle,
As a prety parlour; and also
The hegge as thicke as a castle walle,
That who that list without to stond or go,
Though he wold al day prien to and fro,
He should not see if there were any wight
Within or no; but one within wel might

Perceive alle tho that yeden there withoute
In the field, that was on every side
Covered with corn and grasse; that out of doubt,
Though one wold seeke alle the world wide,
So rich a fielde cold not be espide
On no coast, as of the quantity;
For of alle good thing there was plenty.

And I that al this pleasaunt sight sie,
Thought sodainely I felt so swete an aire
Of the eglentere, that certainely

[1] The seats in this arbour were banks covered with the green turf peculiar to England. The late King of the French was very proud of a small grass-plot at the Château d'Eu, 'turved with turfes' which he had imported from Salisbury Plain.

There is no herte, I deme, in such dispaire,
Ne with thoughtes froward and contraire
So overlaid, but it should soone have bote,[1]
If it had ones felt this savour sote.

And as I stood and cast aside mine eie,
I was ware of the fairest medler tree,[2]
That ever yet in alle my life I sie,
As ful of blossomes as it might be;
Therein a goldfinch[3] leaping pretile
Fro bough to bough; and, as him list, he eet
Here and there of buddes and floures sweet.

And to the herber side was joyninge
This faire tree, of which I have you tolde;
And at the last the brid began to singe,
Whan he had eten what he ete wolde,
So passing swetely, that by manifolde
It was more pleasaunt than I could devise.
And whan his song was ended in this wise,

The nightingale with so mery a note
Answered him, that al the wood ronge
So sodainely, that, as it were a sote,[4]
I stood astonied; so was I with the song
Thorow ravished, that til late and longe,
I ne wist in what place I was, ne where;
And ayen, me thought, she songe ever by mine ere.

Wherefore I waited about busily,
On every side, if I her might see;
And, at the laste, I gan ful wel aspy
Where she sat in a fresh grene laurer tree,
On the further side, even right by me,
That gave so passinge a delicious smelle,
According to the eglentere ful welle.[5]

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[1] That is, But that it would obtain relief. [2] See Introduction.
[3] See Introduction. [4] This is the French *sot*, a fool.
[5] That is. The laurel emitted a perfume which accorded or agreed with that of the eglantine.

Whereof I had so inly great pleasure,
That, as me thought, I surely ravished was
Into Paradise, where my desire
Was for to be, and no ferther passe
As for that day; and on the sote grasse
I sat me downe; for, as for mine entent,
The birdes song was more convenient,

And more pleasaunt to me by many folde,
Than meat or drinke, or any other thinge.
Thereto the herber was so fresh and colde,
The wholesome savours eke so comfortinge,
That, as I demed, sith the beginninge
Of the world was never seene or than
So pleasaunt a ground of none earthly man.

And as I sat, the birds harkening thus,
Me thought that I heard voices sodainely,
The most sweetest and most delicious
That ever any wight, I trowe truely,
Heard in their life; for the armony
And sweet accord was in so good musike,
That the voice to angels most was like.

At the last, out of a grove even by,
That was right goodly and pleasaunt to sight,
I sie where there came, singing lustily,
A world of ladies;[1] but, to telle aright
Their grete beauty, it lieth not in my might,
Ne their array; neverthelesse I shalle
Telle you a part, though I speake not of alle.

The surcotes[2] white, of velvet wele sittinge,
They were in cladde, and the semes echone,
As it were a manere garnishinge,

[1] The superiority of this expression to Dryden's translation, 'A fair assembly of the female kind,' has been already noticed.—DRYDEN, Ann. Ed. vol. iii. p. 67, note.

[2] These surcotes, as may be observed in brasses of this period, resembled our paletots, which are, indeed, imitated from them.

Was set with emerauds, one and one,
By and by; but many a riche stone
Was set on the purfiles, out of doute
Of collars, sleves, and traines round aboute.

As grete pearles, rounde and orient,
Diamondes fine, and rubies redde,
And many another stone, of which I went[1]
The names now; and everich on her hedde
A rich fret of gold, which, without dread,
Was ful of stately riche stones set;
And every lady had a chapelet

On her hedde of branches[2] fresh and grene,
So wele wrought and so marvelously,
That it was a noble sight to sene;
Some of laurer, and some ful pleasantly
Had chapelets of woodbind, and saddely
Some of *agnus castus* ware[3] also
Chapelets freshe; but there were many of tho

That daunced, and eke songe ful soberly,
And alle they yede in manner of compace;
But one there yede in mid the company,
Sole by her selfe; but alle followed the pace
That she kepte, whose hevenely figured face,
So pleasaunt was, and her wele shape person,
That of beauty she past hem everichon.

And more richly beseene, by many folde,
She was also in every maner thing:
On her hedde, full pleasaunt to beholde,
A crowne of golde rich for any king:
A braunch of *agnus castus* eke bearing
In her hand; and to my sight truely,
She lady was of the company.

---

1 *Went* is here used, by poetic licence, for the sake of the rhyme, for *want*, that is, fail to remember.

2 In Sir Harris Nicolas's edition the word branches, not being found in Speght, is inserted in brackets. It is retained as being necessary to the sense.

3 Speght reads *were*, evidently either intended, or a misprint for *ware*.

And she began a roundel lustely,
That '*Suse le foyle, devers moy,*' men calle,
'*Siene et mon joly couer est endormy;*'[1]
And than the company answered alle,[2]
With voices sweet entuned, and so smale,
That me thought it the sweetest melody
That ever I heard in my life sothely.

And thus they came, dauncinge and singinge,
Into the middes of the mede echone,
Before the herber where I was sittinge;
And, God wot, me thought I was wel bigone;
For than I might avise hem one by one,
Who fairest was, who coud best dance or singe,
Or who most womanly was in alle thinge.

They had not daunced but a little throwe,
Whan that I hearde ferre of, sodainely,
So great a noise of thundering trumpes blowe,
As though it should have departed the skie;
And, after that, within a while I sie,
From the same grove where the ladies come oute,
Of men of armes cominge such a route,

As alle the men on earth had been assembled
In that place, wele horsed for the nones,
Steringe so fast, that al the earth trembled:
But for to speke of riches and of stones,
And men and horse, I trowe the large wones[3]
Of Prestir John,[4] ne al his tresory,
Might not unneth have boght the tenth party

[1] That is, *Sous la feuille devers moi, son et mon joli cœur est indormi.* Under the leaf, towards me, his and my lively heart is gone asleep. This seems to be 'French of Stratford atte Bowe.'

[2] The nature of a round or catch is that each person takes up the first part in succession, which harmonizes with all the others.

[3] *The large wones* means the large *ones*, referring to precious stones.

[4] There are many marvels related of the wealth and greatness of this celebrated person, whose very existence, however, has been doubted. It was formerly supposed that his kingdom was in Abyssinia, but it is now generally believed that by the name of Prester John wa s

Of their array: who so list heare more,
I shal rehearse so as I can a lite.
Out of the grove, that I spake of before,
I sie come first, al in their clokes white,
A company, that ware, for their delite,
Chapelets freshe of okes serialle,
Newly sprong, and trumpets[1] they were alle.

On every trumpe hanging a broad banere
Of fine tartarium were ful richely bete;[2]
Every trumpet his lordes armes bere;
About their neckes, with great pearles sete,
Collers brode;[3] for cost they would not lete,
As it would seem, for their schochones[4] echone
Were set aboute with many a precious stone.

---

meant the monarch of the great Indian empire before its conquest by Zenghis Chan. William of Tripoly relates that in 1098, when Antioch was captured by the French, Coiren Chan was king of the eastern parts of Asia; and that after his death the crown was seized by John, a Nestorian priest (presbyter, prebster, prester; French, prêtre), and that he was called from his profession, Prester (or presbyter) John. Joseph Scaliger, *De Emendat. Temp.*, lib. vii., rejects this explanation of the name, and supposes the mistake to have arisen from this monarch's being styled in Persian *Prestigiani*, which, it appears, means *Apostolicus*, the orthodox king. In the Bodl. Lib. MSS., 4, 3, is a collection called *Litteræ Johannis Presbyteri*.—WARTON, *Hist. Engl. Poet.*, sect. ii. Further information on this subject will be found in D'Auvergne's *Relation des Mongols*, 1838, and in Mr. Wright's edition of Marco Polo, recently published.

[1] That is, trumpeters. In the technical language of war, even at the present day, men carrying trumpets are called trumpets; horsemen, sabres or lances; foot-soldiers, bayonets.

[2] The grammatical construction of this sentence is very obscure. *A broad banere* would seem to be the subject of the verb *were*, which would be a false concord. *Tartarium*, Tyrwhitt supposes to be the cloth of Tars.—See vol. i., 159, called by Ducange tartariuus.

[3] *Collers brode*, a nominative absolute, a common form of speech in description. A collar was, from the earliest times, a mark of distinction among the northern nations. Thus, Manlius received the surname of *Torquatus*, from the golden collar which he carried off as a trophy from a Gaulish chief whom he had slain in single combat. Golden torques are to be seen in every collection of British antiquities. The Knights of the Garter still wear this ancient badge of knighthood on occasions of solemnity; it is called the collar of SS.

[4] That is, scutcheons, coats of arms.

Their horse harneis was al white also.
And after them next, in one company,
Came kinges of armes,[1] and no mo,
In clokes of white cloth of gold richely;
Chapelets of greene on their hedes on hie;
The crownes that they on their scochones bere,
Were sette with pearle, ruby, and saphere,

And eke great diamondes many one:
But al their horse harneis and other gere
Was in a sute accordinge, everichone,
As ye have herd the foresaid trumpetes were;
And, by seeminge, they were nothing to lere,
And their guidinge they did so manerly.[2]
And, after hem, came a great compàny

Of heraudes and pursevauntes eke,
Arraied in clothes of white velvette,
And, hardily, they were no thing to seke,
How they on them should the harneis sette;[3]
And every man had on a chapelet;
Scochones and eke harneis, indede,
They had in sute of hem that fore hem yede.

Next after hem came, in armour bright
Al save their heades, seemely knightes nine;
And every claspe and naile, as to my sight,
Of their harneis were of rad golde fine;
With cloth of gold, and furred with ermine
Were the trappoures of their stedes stronge,
Wide and large, that to the ground did honge.

---

[1] The office of the king-at-arms was to preside over the colleges of heralds, and in feudal times he was held in high honour. The ceremony of his coronation was as solemn as that of a real king, only he was anointed with wine instead of oil.

[2] That is, As it appeared, they were in no need of learning any part of their duty, they performed their office in so stately a manner. 'Al their guiding' would seem better than 'And their guiding.'

[3] The construction of this sentence is exactly the same as that explained in the last note. 'And certainly they were in no need of seeking how they should put on their harness, they knew it so well already.'

And every bosse of bridle and paitrel
That they had, was worth, as I wold wene,
A thousand pounde; and on their heddes, wel
Dressed, were crownes of laurer grene,
The best made that ever I had sene;
And every knight had after him ridinge
Three henchemen on him awaitinge.

Of whiche every first,[1] on a short tronchoun,
His lordes helme bare, so richely dight,
That the worst was worthe the ransoun
Of any[2] king; the second a shield bright
Bare at his backe; the thred bare upright
A mighty spere, full sharpe ground and kene,
And every childe[3] ware of leaves grene

A fresh chapelet upon his haires bright;
And clokes white of fine velvet they ware;
Their steedes trapped and raied right,
Without difference, as their lordes were;
And after hem, on many a fresh corsere,
There came of armed knightes such a route,
That they besprad the large field aboute.

And al they ware, after their degrees,
Chapelets newe made of laurer grene;
Some of the oke, and some of other trees,
Some in their honds bare boughes shene,
Some of laurer, and some of okes kene,
Some of hauthorne, and some of the woodbinde,
And many mo which I had not in minde.[4].

---

[1] The word *first* is not found in Speght. It has been inserted between brackets in Sir Harris Nicolas's edition, and as it seems necessary to the sense it has been retained.

[2] Speght reads *a*; Sir Harris Nicolas *any*; the latter is retained.

[3] See vol. i. p. 197, note 3. The extreme particularity of the description of the dress and arms of the ladies and knights is in the fashion of a style of romances which were now becoming common.

[4] Warton says that many of the romances of this period were written by heralds, whose business it was to attend at tournaments,

And so they came, their horses freshely steringe
With bloody sownes of hir trompes loude;
There sie I many an uncouth disguisinge
In the array of these knightes proude;
And at the last, as evenly as they coude,
They took their places in middes of the mede,
And every knight turned his horses hede

To his fellow, and lightly laid a spere
In the rest; and so justes began
On every part about, here and there;
Some brake his spere, some drew down hors and man;
About the field astray the steedes ran;
And, to behold their rule and governaunce,
I you ensure, it was a great pleasaunce.

---

feasts, and other ceremonials, where they had an opportunity of observing and describing the dress of the ladies, and accoutrements and arms of the knights. Thus, in a French poem entitled *Les noms et les armes des Seigneurs*, &c., *a l'assiege de Karleverch en Escoce*, 1300, there is the following heraldic description:—

'Baniere avoit cointée et parée
De or et de asur eschequerée
Au rouge ourle, o jaunes lupars
Determinée estoit la quarte pars.'

In Froissart's *Chronicle* there are many examples of the same taste. Olivier de la Marche, Maitre d'Hôtel to Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, in his amusing *Mémoires* of that noble family, never loses an opportunity of describing the dress and arms of the distinguished persons who came to the Court of his master, or the splendid feasts with which they were entertained. He thus describes Frederick, King of the Romans:—'Le roy des Romans estoit habillé d'un pourpoint a gros cul, a la guise de Behaigne, et d'une robe de drap bleu brun; et avoit un chaperon par gorge, dont la patte venoit jusques a la selle, et estoit decoupé à grans lambeaux; et portoit en son chef un petit chapel gris à court poil; et sur son chapel avoit un petit et estroite couronne d'or, et estoit sa premiere couronne dont il avoit esté couronné a Ais en Alemaigne.—*Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche*, liv. i.

These heraldic descriptions are alluded to by Spenser:—

'To tell the glory of the feast that day,
The goodly servyse, the devisefull sights,
The bridegrome's state, the bride's most rich array,
The pride of ladies and the worth of knights,
The royall banquettes, and the rare delights,
Were work fit for an herald, not for me.'

And so the justes laste an houre and more;
But tho that crowned were in laurer grene
Wanne the prise; their dintes were so sore,
That there was none ayenst hem might sustene:
And the justinge al was left off clene,
And fro their horse the ninth alight anone,
And so did al the remnant everichone.

And forth they yede togider, twain and twain,
That to beholde it was a worthy sight,
Toward the ladies on the greene plain,
That songe and daunced, as I said now right:
The ladies, as soone as they goodly might,
They brake of both the song and dance,
And yede to meet hem with ful glad semblaunce.

And every lady tooke, full womanly,
By the hond a knight, and forth they yede
Unto a faire laurer that stood fast by,
With leves lade,[1] the boughes of grete brede;
And to my dome there never was, indede,
Man that had seene halfe so faire a tre;
For underneath there might it well have be

An hundred persones, at their owne plesaunce,
Shadowed fro the hete of Phebus bright,
So that they sholde have felt no grevaunce
Of raine ne haile that hem hurte might.
The savour eke rejoice would any wight
That had be sicke or melancolious,
It was so very good and vertuous.

And with great reverence they enclined lowe
To the tree so soote, and faire of hewe;
And after that, within a little throwe,
They began to singe and daunce of newe
Some songe of love, some plaininge of untrewe,

[1] That is, Laden with leaves, and having the boughs of great breadth.

Environinge the tree that stood upright;
And ever yede a lady and a knight.

And at the last I cast mine eye aside,
And was ware of a lusty company
That came rominge out of the field wide,
Hond in hond a knight and a lady;
The ladies all in surcotes,[1] that richely
Purfiled were with many a riche stone,
And every knight of grene ware mantles on,

Embrouded wel so as the surcotes were:
And everich had a chapelet on her hedde,
Which did right well upon the shining here,
Made of goodly floures white and redde;
The knightes eke, that they in honde ledde,
In sute of hem ware chapelets everichone,
And before hem went minstreles many one.

As harpes, pipes, lutes, and sautry,[2]
Alle in greene; and on their heades bare,
Of divers floures, made ful craftely,

---

[1] See *ante*, p. 241, note 2.

[2] In the poems of Guillaume de Machault, printed in La Borde, tom. ii., is one entitled *Le Temps Pastour*, containing a curious catalogue of the mediæval instruments of music. The poet describes a magnificent banquet, accompanied with all sorts of minstrelsy, and the description is headed, *Comment l'amant fut au disner de sa dame*:—

'Mais qui veist, apres mangier,
Venir menestraux, sans dangier,
Pignez et miz en pure corps.
Là feurent meints divers acors;
Car je vis là, tout en un cerne, (circle)
Viole, rubebe, guiterne,
L'enmorache, le micamon,
Citole, et le *psalterion*,
Harpes, tabours, trompes, nacaires,
Orgues, cornes, plus de dix paires.
Cornemuse, flajos et cheverettes,
Douceines, symboles, clochettes,
Tymbres, la flauste brehaingue,
Et le grand cornet d'Allemaingue.
Flajos de saus, fistule, *pipe*
Muse d'Aussay, trompe petite,

Al in a sute, goodely chapelets they ware;
And, so dauncinge, into the mede they fare.
In mid the which they foun a tuft that was
Al oversprad with floures in compas.

Whereto they enclined everichone
With grete reverence, and that ful humbly;
And, at the laste, there began anone
A lady for to singe right womanly
A bargaret[1] in praising the daisie;[2]

Buisines, èles, monocorde,
Ou il n'a qu'une seule corde,
Et muse de blet, tout ensamble.
Et certainement, il me semble
Qu' oncques mais tele melodie
Ne fut oncques veues ne oye.
Car chascun d'eux, selon l'acort
De son instrument, sans descort,
Viole, guiterne, citole,
Harpe, trompe, corne, flajole,
Pipe, souffle, muse, naquaire,
Taboure, et quanque on put faire,
De dois, de pennes, et d'archet,
Oïs et vis en ce parchet.'

This musical catalogue forms a *pendant* to the heraldic catalogue which we have just seen. Of these the harp and the sautry, or psalterion, were stringed instruments both in the form of a Δ. Harpe is derived from ἁρπάζω, to catch or grasp with the hand; and psaltery or sautry, from ψάλλω, to twitch or pull, hence to touch the strings of an instrument with the fingers instead of the plectrum—thus both in their form and derivation they are identical. The difference consisted, probably, in the number of strings, size, action, or some other unimportant circumstance.

[1] A *bargaret* is a bergerette, or pastoral; none of the glossaries describe its peculiar features.

[2] Warton conjectures that *Si douce est la Marguerite* may have been the first words of a song of Froissart's on this subject. Speght supposes that Chaucer, in his panegyrics on this flower (which we have already noticed), wished to pay a compliment to Lady Margaret, Countess of Pembroke, King Edward's daughter, and one of his patronesses. Froissart's song in praise of the *daisy* might have had the same object, as he was patronized by Edward III. and Philippa. It was a favourite subject with the poets of this age—See *Le dit de la fleur de lis et de la Marguerite*, by Guillaume Machault. In illustration of the punning compliments on this name, Warton cites also the title of the poetical pieces of Marguerite de Valois, collected and published in 1547, under

For, as me thought, among her notes swete,
She said '*Si douce est la Margarete.*'

Than they alle answered her in fere,
So passingely wel, and so pleasauntly,
That it was a blisful noise to here.
But, I not how, it happed sodainely
As about noone, the Sunne so fervently
Waxe hote, that the prety tender floures
Had lost the beauty of hir fresh coloures,

Forshronke with heat; the ladies eke to-brent,
That they ne wiste where they hem might bestowe;
The knightes swelt, for lack of shade nie shent;
And after that, within a little throwe,
The wind began so sturdily to blowe,
That down goeth all the floures everichone,
So that in al the mede there left not one;

Save such as succoured were among the leves
Fro every storme that might hem assaile,
Growinge under hegges[1] and thicke greves;
And after that there came a storme of haile
And raine in fere,[2] so that, withouten faile,
The ladies ne the knightes nade o threed
Drie on them, so dropping was hir weed.

And whan the storm was cleane passed away,
Tho in white that stoode under the tree,
They felte nothing of the grete affray,
That they in greene withoute had in ybe;[3]
To them they yede for routhe and pite,

---

the name of *Marguerite de la Marguerite des Princesses, très illustre Rayne de Navarre.*—See Warton, *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, sect. xviii.

[1] Sir Harris Nicolas inserts before *hegges* the word *the* in brackets; it is not in Speght: and as it weakens the line it has been omitted.

[2] That is, 'together.'

[3] The construction of this line is almost lost in the violent transposition of the words. The meaning is, 'Those in white that stood under the tree felt nothing of the great affray' (or trouble) 'that those in green outside' (the tree) 'had been in.'

Them to comforte after their great disease,
So faine they were the helplesse for to ease.

Than I was ware how one of hem in grene
Had on a crowne, rich and wel sittinge;
Wherefore I demed wel she was a quene,
And tho in greene on her were awaitinge;
The ladies then in white that were comminge
Toward them, and the knightes in fere,
Began to comforte hem, and make hem chere.

The queen in white, that was of grete beauty,
Took by the hond the queen that was in grene,
And said, 'Suster, I have right great pity
Of your annoy, and of the troublous tene,
Wherein ye and your company have bene
So longe, alas! and if that it you please
To go with me, I shal do you the ease,

'In all the pleasure that I can or may;'
Whereof the other, humbly as she might,
Thanked her; for in right il array
She was with storm and heat, I you behight;
And every lady, then anone right,
That were in white, one of them took in grene
By the hond; which whan the knights had sene,

In like wise ech of them tooke a knight
Cladde in greene, and forthe with hem they fare,
To an hegge, where they anon right,
To make their justes,[1] they wolde not spare
Boughes to hewe down, and eke trees square,
Wherwith they made hem stately fires grete,
To drye their clothes that were wringinge wete.

And after that, of herbes that there grewe,
They made, for blisters of the Sunne brenninge,
Very good and wholesome ointmentes new,

[1] This passage is obscure, and probably corrupt.

Wherewith[1] they yede the sick fast anointinge;
And after that they yede about gaderinge
Pleasaunt salades, which they made hem ete,
For to refreshe their great unkindly hete.

The lady of the Leafe then began to praye
Her of the Floure (for so to my seeminge
They sholde be, as by their arraye)
To soupe with her, and eek, for any thinge,[2]
That she shold with her alle her people bringe:
And she ayen, in right goodly manere,
Thanketh her of her most frendely chere,

Saying plainely, that she would obaye
With al her herte al her commaundement;
And then anon, without lenger delaye,
The lady of the Leafe hath one ysent
For a palfray, after her intent,
Arrayed wel and faire in harneis of gold,
For nothing lacked, that to him long shold.[3]

And after that, to al her company
She made to purveye horse and every thinge
That they needed; and than ful lustily,
Even by the herber where I was sittinge,
They passed alle, so pleasantly singinge,
That it would have comforted any wight.
But than I sie a passing wonder sight;

For than the nightingale, that al the day
Had in the laurer sate, and did her might
The whole service to singe longing to May,[4]

---

[1] Speght reads *that*; but the sense so obviously requires *with*, and the MS. contraction for *with* might so easily have been mistaken for that, that *with* has been adopted in the text.

[2] That is, Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

[3] 'Nothing was wanting that to him should belong.'

[4] This pretty idea, that the birds in their songs are offering their worship to God, to Nature, or as here, to May, has already occurred in *The Court of Love*, and *The Assembly of Foules:* indeed, it belongs to this school of poetry.

Al sodainely began to take her flight;
And to the lady of the Leafe, forthright,
She flew, and set her on her hond softely,[1]
Which was a thing I marveled of gretely.

The goldfinch eke, that fro the medler tree
Was fled for heat into the bushes colde,
Unto the lady of the Flower gan flee,
And on her hond he set him as he wolde,[2]
And pleasauntly his winges gan to fold;
And for to singe they pained hem both, as sore
As they had do of al the day before.

And so these ladies rode forth a great pace,
And al the rout of knightes eke in fere;
And I that had seen al this wonder case,
Thought I wold assaye in some manere,
To know fully the trouth of this matere;
And what they were that rode so pleasantly.
And whan they were the herber passed by,

I drest me forth, and happed to mete anone
Right a faire lady, I do you ensure;
And she came riding by herselfe alone,
Alle in white; with semblance ful demure
I salued her, and bad good aventure
Might her befalle, as I coud most humbly;
And she answered, 'My doughter, gramercy!'

'Madame,' quoth I, 'if that I durst enquere
Of you, I would faine, of that company,
Wite what they be that past by this arbere?'
And she ayen answered right frendely:—
'My faire doughter, alle tho that passed here by
In white clothing, be servaunts everichone
Unto the Leafe, and I my selfe am one.

---

[1] See Introduction. [2] See Introduction.

'See ye not her that crowned is,' quoth she,
'Alle in white?'—'Madame,' quoth I, 'yes:'[1]
'That is Diane, goddesse of chastite;
And for because that she a maiden is,
In her honde the braunch she beareth this,
That *agnus castus* men calle properly;
And alle the ladies in her company,

'Which ye se of that herbe chapelets weare,
Be such as han kept alway hir maidenheed:
And alle they that of laurer chapelets beare,
Be such as hardy were, and manly indeed,—
Victorious name which never may be dede!
And alle they were so worthy of hir hond
In hir time, that none might hem withstond.

'And tho that weare chapelets on their hede
Of fresh woodbinde,[2] be such as never were
To love untrue in word, thought, ne dede,
But aye stedfast; ne for pleasaunce, ne fere,
Though that they should their hertes al to-tere,
Would never flit, but ever were stedfast,
Til that their lives there asunder brast.'

'Now faire madame,' quoth I, 'yet would I praye
Your ladiship, if that it mighte be,
That I might knowe, by some maner waye,
(Sith that it hath liked your beaute,
The trouth of these ladies for to telle me);
What that these knightes be in rich armour,
And what tho be in grene and weare the flour?

'And why that some did reverence to that tre,
And some unto the plot of floures faire?'
'With right good will, my faire doughter,' quoth she,

---

[1] *Yes* is the answer to a question in the negative form. See vol. ii. p. 249, note 1.

[2] The woodbind is a good emblem of faithful attachment; for it winds itself so firmly round some stronger tree that it becomes indissolubly fixed in the bark.

'Sith your desire is good and debonaire;
The nine crowned be very exemplaire
Of al honour longing to chivalry;
And those certaine be called the Nine Worthy,[1]

'Which ye may see now ridinge alle before,
That in hir time did many a noble dede,
And for their worthines ful ofte have bore
The crowne of laurer leaves on their hede,
As ye may in your olde bookes rede;
And how that he that was a conquerour,
Had by laurer alway his most honour.

'And tho that beare bowes[2] in their honde
Of the precious laurer so notable,
Be such as were, I wol ye understonde,

---

[1] The Nine Worthies are as celebrated in romance as the Seven Champions of Christendom. Their valiant deeds supplied designs for tapestry, as in Montfaucon's account of the tapestry of Charles V., King of France, we find Le Saint Graal, Le Graunt tappis de *Neuf Preux*, &c. They formed the theme of the May-games of the common people. Thus Strype informs us, 'On the 30th of May was a goodly May-game in Fenchurch-street, with drums, and guns, and pikes, with the NINE WORTHIES who rid. And each made his speech.'—*Eccles. Mem.*, c. xlix. In *Love's Labour Lost* they appear as the heroes of Armado's 'delightful ostentation, or show, or pageant, or antick, or fire-work.'—Act v. sc. 2. Shakespeare, however, in making four of the Worthies heathens, viz., Hector, Pompey, Alexander, Hercules, differs from Dryden, who thus renders this passage:—

> 'These laurelled chiefs were men of mighty fame;
> Nine worthies were they called of different rites,
> Three Jews, three Pagans, and three Christian knights.'
> *The Flower and the Leaf.*

[2] The spelling of this word has led Dryden, in his translation, into a ludicrous mistake. *Bowes*, here means *boughs*, as appears from their being 'bowes of laurer,' a wood which was never used for making *bows*. Besides, the bow was the weapon of a yeoman, not of a knight, who would have disdained to carry a bow as much as a cavalry officer would to carry a musket. Dryden thus renders the passage:—

> 'Who bear the bows were knights of Arthur's reign;
> Twelve they, and twelve the peers of Charlemagne:
> For bows the strength of brawny arms imply,
> Emblems of valour and of victory.'

The *bough* of laurel is the emblem of victory.

Noble knightes of the round table,[1]
And eke the Douseperis[2] honourable,
Which they beare in signe of victory;
It is witnesse of their deedes mightily.

'Eek there be knightes olde of the garter,[3]
That in hir time did right worthily;
And the honour they did to the laurer,
Is for by it they have their laud wholly,[4]
Their triumph eke, and martial glory;
Which unto them is more parfite richesse,
Than any wight imagine can or gesse.

---

[1] The Knights of Arthur's Court, whose valiant deeds form the subject of the Romances of Merlin, the Sangreal, Morte d'Arthure, &c. Being all equal in valour, they sat at a round table, at which there could be no precedence. So great was the admiration of the fabled exploits of these knights, that in the reign of Edward I., Roger, Earl of Mortimer, erected a round table in his Castle of Kenilworth, where he restored the pageantry supposed to have been observed at that of King Arthur.—Warton, *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, i., sect. iii. See also vol. ii. p. 72, note 1.

[2] That is, *Les douze pairs*, or twelve peers, or paladins, of Charlemagne, of whom Roland and Oliver were the most distinguished. The romance ascribed to Turpin or Tilpin, Archbishop of Rheims, in the eighth century, but probably not earlier than the eleventh, in which Charlemagne's expulsion of the Moors from Spain is celebrated, is, as Warton supposes, the origin of all the fables relating to the twelve peers.—*Hist. Eng. Poet.*, xvi., xvii.

[3] The epithet *olde*, applied to the Knights of the Garter, would seem to imply that Edward III., in establishing that order, only revived an ancient and decayed institution. Warton is disposed to credit the common story of the origin of the name. Speaking of Edward's erecting a round chamber and table at Windsor Castle, in imitation of King Arthur, he adds, 'It was a prelude to the renowned order of the Garter, which he soon afterwards founded at Windsor, during the ceremonies of a magnificent feast, which had been proclaimed by his heralds in Germany, France, Scotland, Burgundy, Heynault, and Brabant, and lasted fifteen days. . . . Nothing is more probable than that this latter foundation of Edward the Third took its rise from the exploded story of the garter of the Countess of Salisbury. . . . It is by no means unreasonable to suppose that the fantastic collar of Essess (SS), worn by the Knights of this Order, was an allusion to her name.' —*Hist. Eng. Poet.*, sect. vii.

[4] That is, Is because by it they have their praise.

'For one leafe given of that noble tree
To any wight that hath done worthily,
And it be done so as it ought to be,
Is more honour than anything earthly;
Witnes of Rome[1] that founder was truly
Of alle knighthood and deeds marvelous;
Record I take of Titus Livius.

'And as for her that crowned is in greene,
It is Flora,[2] of these floures goddesse;
And all that here on her awaiting beene,
It are such folk that loved idlenesse,
And not delite in no businesse,
But for to hunte and hauke, and pleye in medes,
And many other suchlike idle dedes.

'And for the great delite and pleasaunce
They have to the floure, and so reverently
They unto it do such obeisaunce
As ye may se.'—'Now faire Madame,' quoth I,
'If I durst aske what is the cause and why,
That knightes have the ensigne of honour,
Rather by the leafe than the floure?'

'Soothly, doughter,' quod she, 'this is the trouth':—
For knightes ever should be persevering,
To seeke honour without feintise or slouth,

---

[1] The construction of this sentence is intricate. The word *him* seems to be understood thus, 'Witness *him* of Rome, that founder was,' &c. If so, the allusion is to Julius Cæsar, to whom was decreed by the senate the right of perpetually wearing a laurel crown, an honour which he prized more than any other; not, as Chaucer supposes, from the glory that it conferred, but, according to Suetonius, because it hid his baldness, of which he was excessively ashamed. 'Calvitii vero deformitatem iniquissime ferre, obtrectatorum sæpe jocis obnoxiam expertus; ideoque et deficientem capillum revocare a vertice assueverat, et ex omnibus decretis sibi a senatu populoque honoribus, non aliud aut recepit, aut usurpavit libentius, quam jus laureæ coronæ perpetuo gestandæ.'—SUET. *D. Julius Cæsar.*

[2] See Introduction.

Fro wele to better in all manner thinge;
In signe of which, with leaves aye lastinge
They be rewarded after their degre,
Whose lusty green may not appaired be,[1]

'But aie keping their beaute fresh and greene;
For there nis storme that may hem deface,
Haile nor snow, winde nor frostes kene;
Wherfore they have this property and grace.
And for the floure, within a little space
Wolle be lost, so simple of nature
They be, that they no greevance may endure;

'And every storme will blowe them soone awaye,
Ne they laste not but for a sesone;
That is the cause, the very trouth to saye,
That they may not, by no way of resone,
Be put to no such occupation.'
'Madame,' quoth I, 'with al mine whole servise
I thanke you now, in my most humble wise;

'For now I am ascertained thurghly,
Of every thing that[2] I desired to knowe.'
'I am right glad that I have said, sothly,
Ought to your pleasure, if ye wille me trowe,'
Quod she ayen, 'but to whom do ye owe
Your service? and which wille ye honoure,
Tel me I pray, this yere, the Leafe or the Floure?'

'Madame,' quoth I, 'though I be least worthy,
Unto the Leafe I owe mine observaunce:'
'That is,' quod she, 'right wel done certainly;

---

[1] In Speght this line stands thus, 'Whose lusty green May, may not appaired be.' The second word *may* would seem to have been inserted by an error of the copyist, as it makes the line too long, and spoils the sense.

[2] In Sir Harris Nicolas' edition, the word *that* is inserted in brackets; and, as it improves the line, it has been retained.

And I pray God to honour you avaunce,
And kepe you fro the wicked remembraunce
Of Malebouche,[1] and al his crueltie,
And alle that good and well conditioned be.

'For here may I no lenger now abide,
I must followe the great company,
That ye may see yonder before you ride.'
And forth, as I couth, most humbly,
I tooke my leve of her, as she gan hie
After them as faste as ever she might;
And I drow homeward, for it was nigh night,

And put al that I had seene in writing,
Under support[2] of them that lust it to rede.
O little booke, thou art so unconning,
How darst thou put thy self in prees,[3] for drede?
It is wonder that thou wexest not rede!
Sith that thou wost ful lite who shall behold
Thy rude langage, ful boistously unfold.

EXPLICIT.

---

[1] That is, 'Evil-mouth,' slander.

[2] This appears to mean, 'Under the patronage of them,' &c.

[3] If the date of this poem were a hundred years later, the reader might suppose that the meaning of this passage was, How dare you venture to be printed, to put yourself into the press? but as it was written in the latter half of the fourteenth century, it must mean, How dare you venture into the crowd?

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